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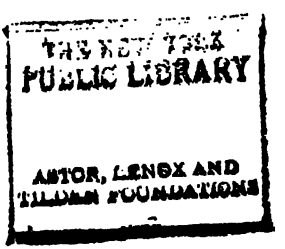
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WILLIAM PALEY, D.D.

THE

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM PALEY, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF CARLISLE.

MEMOIR,

BY THE REV. ROBERT LYNAM, A.M.

ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN TO THE MAGDALEN HOSPITAL.

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY:

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MEMOIRS OF THE AUTHOR.

WILLIAM PALEY, author of the following admirable volumes, was born at Peterborough, in the month of July, 1743. The day of his birth has not been preserved, but his baptism was solemnized on the 30th of August. His family was reputable and ancient, having resided for several generations in Craven, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. In this district, his great-grandfather John, and his grandfather Thomas Paley, enjoyed in succession a small patrimonial estate at Langcliffe, in the parish of Giggleswick.

The father of our Author bore the same name, and was of the same college and profession, as his son. Having proceeded to the degree of Bachelor of Arts, at Christ's College, Cambridge, he was instituted August, 1735, to the vicarage of Helpstone, a small benefice in Northamptonshire. His promotion to a minor canonry in the cathedral church of Peterborough, occasioned him to fix his residence in that city; and here it was that the subject of these memoirs received his birth. He was the eldest child, and only son; but the family was subsequently augmented by the birth of three daughters. His mother was Elizabeth Clapham (of Stackhouse, in the parish of Giggleswick,) a woman commended for her strength and activity of mind; which qualities her son inherited, as well as the benevolence of disposition ascribed to his father.

Although our Author at his birth seemed excluded from the soil on which his ancestors had long resided; yet fortune, at an early age, transplanted him to the same northern abode. In 1745, his father resigned his minor canonry, and removed to Giggleswick, upon receiving the appointment of head master to the Free Grammar School established there. By this change, young Paley was placed within the sphere of those local and moral associations, which are supposed to have had a strong and permanent influence upon his character. "His originality," observes one of his friends, "I apprehend after all must be traced to the peculiar scene of his boyhood and youth. In a spot comparatively rude and rustic, like Giggleswick, in the free and familiar acquaintance with a people of strong mother-wit and Sabine simplicity, the peculiar genius of Paley was formed, void of art, and abhorrent to all affectation." An able critic* has attributed equal power to the same cause. The inhabitants of the rugged and remote tract of Craven, have, he assures us, like other mountaineers, a character more strongly marked than their lowland neighbours, from which Paley derived an early tincture, which no intercourse with the world ever wore off, or produced an inclination to wear off. They possess clear and shrewd understandings; great humour and naïveté in their conversation, fondness for old stories, rusticity often affected, and a dialect which heightens and sets off every other peculiarity.

Amidst a people of such native originality, the mind of Paley received its earliest ideas and impressions. To his father he was indebted, as well for the first seeds of scholastic knowledge, as for the careful infusion of moral and religious principles. No instances of remarkable precocity are related of him; although his boyhood was distinguished by a studious disposition of mind, and greater habits of reflection than are usually discovered at that age: These might be increased by his inability to join in the ordinary amusements of youth. He was excluded from all athletic sports, by wanting in body that activity which nature had liberally bestowed upon his mind; so that the quiet and indolent recreation of angling was the principal amusement in which he took delight. His mind was ardent and his curiosity active, especially upon subjects of mechanical ingenuity. That attention also, which he paid through his whole life, to the laws of his country, and the practice of courts of justice, was early awakened in his bosom. Having been present one year at the assizes in Lancaster, his youthful fancy was so

* Quarterly Review, No. xviii. p. 390.

interested by the proceedings he had witnessed, that the solemnities of the court were re-acted at school, and young Paley, assuming the dignity of a venerable judge, had his playmates arraigned before his mimic tribunal.

But the realities of life were soon to commence. Upon the completion of his fifteenth year, he accompanied his father to Cambridge, and was admitted on the 16th of November, 1758, a sizer of Christ's College; a society which can enumerate among its members, Milton, the sublimest of poets, and Paley, the clearest of philosophers. The journey to Cambridge, or part of it, was to be accomplished on horseback: and our young hero not being so skilful in keeping close to a steed, as to an argument, suffered a series of disasters which he used himself to relate. "I was never a good horseman, and when I followed my father on a pony of my own, on my first journey to Cambridge, I fell off seven times. I was lighter then than I am now, and my falls were not likely to be serious. My father, on hearing a thump, would turn his head half aside and say, 'Take care of thy money, lad.'"

The year between Paley's admission and residence at college was devoted to the cultivation of mathematical knowledge. As classics were the only study pursued at Giggleswick school, he was placed under the care of Mr. William Howarth, at Dishforth, near Topcliffe, in Yorkshire, for the sake of instruction in geometry and algebra. To this new field of investigation there is no doubt that he applied himself sedulously and with avidity. In demonstrative science there must have been something congenial to his logical and penetrating mind; for notwithstanding his studies in it were commenced late, and suffered considerable interruption for two years at college, he was able to carry off the highest mathematical honour which a mathematical university can confer.

His residence at Cambridge began in October, 1759, when he had attained the age of little more than sixteen. His father seems to have formed a correct estimate of his genius, and to have indulged in hopeful anticipations, which rested on some stronger basis than parental partiality. "My son," he observed to one of his pupils, "is now gone to college—he'll turn out a great man, very great indeed—I'm certain of it; for he has by far the *clearest* head I ever met with in my life." Paley possessed few advantages, besides his acuteness, to assist him. Adorned with no accomplishments of learning but what a village school could supply, he was to contend with the well-trained sons of Eton, Westminster, and other public seminaries. Furnished with little experience from his intercourse with the world, he found himself, at the most dangerous age of boyish petulance, left to his own control. It was difficult at sixteen to resist the temptations which on all sides solicited him; inclination was to be thwarted, idleness repelled, and pleasure overcome. His uncouthness of appearance and rusticity of manners, were at first topics of merriment to his more polished collegians; these disadvantages, however, were soon overlooked in the admiration which his worth and talents excited. Horace long ago had written his apology:

> ——————————Minùs aptus acutis
> Naribus horum hominum? Rideri possit, eò quòd
> Rusticiùs tonso toga defluit, et malè laxus
> In pede calceus hæret? At est bonus, ut melior vir
> Non alius quisquam: at tibi amicus: at ingenium ingens
> Inculto latet hoc sub corpore.——————*Serm.* lib. i. 3. ψ. 30.

It was soon discovered that the young fresh-man was an agreeable and entertaining, if not an elegant companion. His powers of conversation, his facetiousness, and that invincible good-humour, which always made him willing to turn a laugh against himself, speedily drew around him a large circle of idle and thoughtless young men. This love of society had nearly overcome his industry, and ruined all hopes of obtaining eminence in the university. A singular occurrence (disclosed by himself) fortunately awakened reflection, and stimulated the great powers of his mind into vigorous action. "I spent," he confessed, "the first two years of my under-graduateship happily, but unprofitably. I was constantly in society, where we were not immoral, but idle and rather expensive. At the commencement of my third year, however, after having left the usual party at rather a late

hour in the evening, I was awakened at five in the morning by one of my companions, who stood at my bed-side and said. 'Paley, I have been thinking what a fool you are. I could do nothing, probably, were I to try, and can afford the life I lead; you could do every thing, and cannot afford it. I have had no sleep during the whole night on account of these reflections, and am now come solemnly to inform you, that if you persist in your indolence, I must renounce your society.'

"I was so struck with the visit and the visitor, that I lay in bed great part of the day, and formed my plan. I ordered my bed-maker to prepare my fire every evening, in order that it might be lighted by myself. I arose at five, read during the whole of the day, except such hours as chapel and hall required, allotting to each portion of time its peculiar branch of study; and just before the closing of gates (nine o'clock) I went to a neighbouring coffee-house, where I constantly regaled upon a mutton chop and a dosé of milk-punch. And thus, on taking my bachelor's degree, I became senior wrangler."

Nothing could be more magnanimous than Paley's resolution, except it be the warm expostulation of his ingenious friend. Before he could proceed to his degree, it was necessary to keep what is called an *act*, that is, to defend so many mathematical and philosophical questions in the public schools of disputation. He happened to fix upon a subject which occasioned him a little embarassment; although he had selected it from a book usually referred to at that time in the university, *Johnson's Quæstiones Philosophicæ*. The most authentic account of this incident is to be found in Bishop Watson's memoirs of his own life.* "The first year I was moderator," says this prelate, "Mr. Paley, (afterward known to the world by many excellent productions, though there are some ethical and some political principles in his Philosophy which I by no means approve,) and Mr. Frere, a gentleman of Norfolk, were examined together. A report prevailed, that Mr. Frere's grandfather would give him a thousand pounds, if he were senior wrangler: the other moderator agreed with me in thinking that Mr. Paley was his superior, and we made him senior wrangler. Mr. Frere, much to his honour, on an imputation of partiality being thrown on my colleague and myself, publicly acknowledged that he deserved only the second place; a declaration which could never have been made, had they not been examined in the presence of each other.

"Paley, I remember, had brought me for one of the questions he meant for his act, *Æternitas pœnarum contradicit divinis attributis?*† I had accepted it; and indeed I never refused a question, either as moderator or as professor of divinity. A few days afterward, he came to me in a great fright, saying, that the master of his college (Dr. Thomas, dean of Ely) had sent to him, and insisted on his not keeping on such a question. I readily permitted him to change it, and told him, that if it would lessen his master's apprehensions, he might put in *non* before *contradicit;* and he did so. Dr. Thomas, I had little doubt, was afraid of being looked upon as a heretic at Lambeth, for suffering a member of his college to dispute on such a question, notwithstanding what Tillotson had published on the subject many years before.

"It is, however, a subject of great difficulty. It is allowed on all hands that the happiness of the righteous will be, strictly speaking, everlasting; and I cannot see the justness of that criticism which would intrepret the same word in the same verse in different senses. 'And these shall go away into *everlasting* punishment, but the righteous into *everlasting* life,' Matt. xxv. 46.‡ On the other hand, reason is shocked at the idea of God being considered as a relentness tyrant, inflicting everlasting punishment which answers no benevolent end. But how is it proved that the everlasting punishment of the wicked may not answer a benevolent end, may not be the means of keeping the righteous in everlasting holiness

* Vol. i. p. 30, octavo edition.

† Whether eternal punishments are repugnant to the divine attributes.

‡ The reader, perhaps, will recollect that the last part of the verse in our translation runs thus: "*but the righteous into life eternal.*" The version above is more correct, because in the Greek the same epithet is applied both to "*punishment*" and "*life.*"

and obedience? How is it proved that it may not answer, in some other way unknown to us, a benevolent end, in promoting God's moral government of the universe?"

There is an affecting sermon by our Author, relative to this subject, No. 31, upon the *Terrors of the Lord.* As the reader's reflection cannot fail to have been excited upon this awful topic, he will pardon me for introducing to him a quotation from *Bouhours.*† "The reason that St. Bernard gives for the eternal punishment of a sin, that sometimes lasts but for a moment, is equally ingenious and solid. The temporal sin of an inflexible and obstinate will is doubtless eternally punished, because though it is short in regard to the time, or the action, it is of long duration in regard to an obstinate will; so that the guilty person would never have ceased to have desired to sin, if he had never died; or rather he would have desired always to have lived, that he might have had always the power of sinning. Therefore one may say of him, adds the saint, that in a little space he filled up the measure of endless time; so that, as he never desired to change his design in any time, he deserved to suffer the punishment of his sin through all time."

Athough Paley carried away the palm of senior wrangler, his honours for some time were but barren and unprofitable to him. It might have been expected, even by those who set no very high value on learning, that the youth, whom Alma Mater had distinguished as one of the first of her scholars, she would not with parental ingratitude have dismissed to toil in the slavery of a school. In the present day, Cambridge, no doubt, could find some more honourable and lucrative employment for a senior wrangler; although many such scholars as the accomplished Gray, she would abandon without compunction to indigence and neglect. In 1763, even the top of the Tripos seems to have been rather a frigid and comfortless elevation; for the first reward of Paley's labours, was only to be recommended by his tutor for the situation of second assistant in an academy at Greenwich, kept by Mr. Bracken. The reader who delights in biography, will recollect that similar occupations of scholastic drudgery were filled even by Dr. Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson, two of the ablest writers in our language. But this took place before the bright talents of these great authors had emerged into notice; and their fate, though severe, is less a subject of wonder, as no university had crowned them with her dusky laurels. However, Paley was happy under circumstances which would have made many scholars miserable. His employment was teaching the Latin language, which gave him what he stood in need of, an opportunity of improvement in classical knowledge. His chief pleasures consisted in visiting the theatres and frequenting courts of justice; tastes which originated early, and abided with him through life. So little was he oppressed with the irksomeness of his situation, and so humble was the sphere of his wishes, that he often declared that "the rank of first assistant in the academy was then the highest object of his ambition."

The subject of an author's first production usually discovers the natural bias of his genius. But the eccentricities of the human mind are innumerable, and imagination would weary itself in divining what was the early birth of Paley's talent. His first known composition, we are assured, was a *Poem in the manner of Ossian.* It is singular enough to observe the genius, which in maturity relished nothing but the strictest realities of truth, employed in conjuring up the shadowy spectres of imagination; the intellect of Paley, which was all light and clearness, enveloping itself in the dense mistiness of Ossian. His next literary attempt was once more correspondent to our expectations. The representatives of the university give four annual prizes of fifteen guineas each, which are adjudged by the vice-chancellor and heads of colleges, to two senior and two middle Bachelors of Arts, who shall compose the best dissertations in Latin prose. For one of these rewards Paley, who was a senior bachelor, offered himself a candidate in 1765. The subject was, to institute *a comparison between the Stoic and Epicurean philosophy, with respect to the influence of each on the morals of a people.* Paley gave the preference to the Epicurean philosophy; considered of course in its genuine purity, freed from those calumnies with which its enemies had aspersed

† Pensées ingénieuses des P. P. de l'Eglise.

it, and divested of those additions with which it had been encumbered by its friends. The success of the essay was endangered by the English notes that were affixed to it. These gave rise to a suspicion that the Author might have been assisted by his father, some country clergyman, who having forgotten his Latin, had written the notes in English. Dr. Powell, master of St. John's College, gave his verdict in favour of the performance, alledging that "it contained more matter than was to be found in all the others; that it would be unfair to reject such a dissertation merely on suspicion; since the notes were applicable to the subject, and shewed the Author to be a young man of the most promising abilities and extensive reading." The majority of the heads confirming this opinion, the first prize was awarded to Paley.

He shewed both modesty and taste in his choice of a motto for the essay. The following words, which he selected, express the anxious feelings of many a candidate for honours:—

> Non jam prima peto Mnestheus, neque vincere certo,
> Quamquam O!———*Æneid.* v. 194.

His success was communicated to his friend Mr. Stoddart, in a letter without date or name, and the brevity of which even a Spartan might commend. The whole of it was this: "Io triumphe! Chamberlayne is second." He had reason to exult at his victory over Mr. Chamberlayne, as this gentleman was an eminent classical scholar, and had gained the first members' prize in the year preceding. The brevity of Paley's epistolary correspondence is thus noticed by one of his friends. "In his younger days, he was very averse to writing letters. I have often paid a penny a line for his correspondence, relating chiefly to college business, and once a penny a word. He used to say in his jocular manner, that 'letters to friends answered no other purpose than to shew a man's wit, or to express the sincerity of his friendship. My friends,' added he, 'are well convinced that I possess both.'"

His bachelor's essay, though not distinguished for elegant Latinity, has been extolled for the vigour of thought and the justness of reasoning which it exhibited. The conclusion contains an imitation of a noble sentence of Locke's,* and pronounces a splendid but just eulogy of our Christian faith.

"Illuxit aliquando religio, cujus auctor est Deus, cujus materia veritas, cujus finis est felicitas. Religio aliquando illuxit, quæ Stoæ paradoxon in principiis verè Epicureis fundari voluit. Sufficit ad felicitatem virtus, virtutis tamen finis est felicitas. Stabile denique quiddam est in quo pedem figamus, petetque nil veterem potuisse disciplinam, nil non perfecisse Christianam." "At length there hath shone upon us a religion, which has God for its author, truth for its matter, and happiness for its end. At length there hath shone upon us a religion, which, on principles truly Epicurean, establishes the Stoical paradox of the sufficiency of virtue. Virtue alone is now sufficient for our happiness in this world; and yet happiness in another world is the proper end and motive of all virtue in this.† We have, therefore, at last, a foundation on which we may firmly rest; and it is evident, that as by the doctrines of ancient philosophy, little or nothing was done for the good of mankind, so nothing has been left undone for it by Christianity."

With such sentiments of admiration towards the religion he was to inculcate, Paley entered into holy orders; and served the curacy of Greenwich, under Dr. Hinchliffe, after bishop of Peterborough. Thinking himself injured in the distribution of some money sent by the parents of the pupils, as presents to the different assistants, he quitted the academy of Mr. Braken. In this there was nothing to be regretted except the dissension: sagacity and genius have little scope afforded them in a school; without an uncommon share of patience and temper, they even disqualify a person for the toil of incessant teaching.

* His words are, with respect to the New Testament; "It has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter."—*Locke's Works*, vol x. p. 306.

† See the Author's Moral Philosophy, vol. i. chap. 7. Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, *and for the sake of everlasting happiness.*

In June, 1766, Paley was elected Fellow of Christ's College; and thus received the reward long due to his rank on the Tripos. He was now induced to become resident in the university, and to lend his assistance to Dr. Shepherd in the tuition of the college. His partner in this office was Mr. John Law, a gentleman distinguished for high attainments, and who through life was attached to our Author with all the cordiality of the most intimate friendship. His father was Dr. Edmund Law, master of Peter-House, who, upon his promotion to the see of Carlisle in 1769, shewed his regard for Paley, by appointing him to the station of his chaplain. This prelate's third son, Edward, the late Lord Ellenborough, was aided in no small degree by Mr. Paley, in the successful cultivation of those talents which raised him to the high judicial rank of Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench. In congratulating the judge upon his rapid advancement, our Author paid him rather a quaint compliment: "Your Lordship has risen higher and sooner than any man of whom I have lately heard, except M. Garnerin," the French aeronaut.

In 1771, a circumstance took place, that called forth from Mr. Paley, and Mr. Law, a display of virtuous intrepidity, which, considering their youth, no panegyrist can too warmly commend.* "When the hall of Christ's College, which had been promised through the interest of Dr. Shepherd, was fitting up for a benefit concert for Ximenes, a Spainsh musician, warmly patronized by Lord Sandwich; Mr. Paley and Mr. Law peremptorily insisted that the promise should be recalled, unless satisfactory assurance was given that a lady, then living with his Lordship, and who had been openly distributing tickets, should not be permitted to attend. At first the senior tutor, who was in habits of intimacy with Lord Sandwich, objected to the idea of excluding any lady from a public concert; but afterward, when they urged, that, standing in a public situation, as the instructors of youth, it was their duty to discountenance every sort of immorality, and threatened to appeal to the society in case of his refusal, the assurance was given, and the arrangements allowed to proceed."

In April, 1771, Mr. Paley first appeared as one of the preachers at the Royal Chapel, Whitehall. The following year he and Mr. Law were admitted to an equal share, with Dr. Shepherd, of the emoluments as well as labours of college tuition. This was but common justice; for no tutors could be gifted with greater skill in awakening and improving the faculties of their pupils, and few ever shewed such a conscientious regard to their moral purity. It was the zealous endeavour of these upright men, to repair the laxity of college discipline, to place some reasonable control upon youth, and not to allow them, just emancipated from school, and glowing with the vehemence of passion, to adjust their time and pursuits by their own blind inclination. In the distribution of the duties of the lecture-room, the mathematical department was assigned to Mr. Law; his colleague lectured upon ethics, divinity, and metaphysics. In the province of instruction Paley excelled. He was convinced, that although his authority might collect together a certain number of young men, he should have few but listless and indolent auditors, if his art did not stimulate them to take an interest in the subjects of discussion. He used to begin, therefore, by suggesting difficulties, and exciting doubts in their minds; judging that when their curiosity was awakened, that would impel them forward in the direction he desired. The idle and the indifferent were made to undergo a mortifying chastisement. The close, pointed, and persevering questions of the lecturer, aided by the mirth of the pupils, prepared a species of mental torture for the ignorant, which few would be hardy enough to encounter. The metaphysical lectures began with Locke's incomparable Essay; Clarke on the Attributes, and Butler's Analogy, followed: and the abstruseness of all these books he relieved by familiar illustrations, and a free paraphrase in his own perspicuous style. In his ethical lectures he is said to have advanced the leading tenets and principles, which he afterward fully developed in his great work upon Moral and Political Philosophy. Sunday and Wednesday evenings were reserved for explication of parts of the Greek Testament: and it was his custom to recommend to theological students, the perusal of

* See Meadley's Life of Paley, which has been consulted all along for facts. In these his accuracy has not been questioned; although every one will not be disposed to concur with him in his inferences and observations.

Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity, on the Epistles. Some such course of study as this, of which we have given the outline, every man of liberal education might pursue with advantage. It would invigorate his understanding, and increase his powers of thinking and judging, far better than many parts of the mathematics. It would teach him (what men of all professions are concerned to know) the general properties of his own mind, the relations in which he stands to the highest and the lowest of intellectual beings, and the indestructible basis on which he may build his hope of a complete and permanent happiness hereafter.

We regret that in the first public transaction with which Mr. Paley's name is connected, his conduct should appear of that equivocal nature, which the most candid person cannot approve. In 1772, a petition was presented to the house of commons, praying for relief from subscription to the thirty-nine articles of the church. This was signed by gentlemen of the professions of law and physic, and by about two hundred clergymen. In the house, the subject created some warm discussion, and the petition was finally rejected by a very large majority. As to the mere abstract question of the propriety or injustice of subscription, it would be unpardonable in this place to revive a dormant controversy; we are concerned only with the conduct of Mr. Paley. "Though personally attached to many of the reforming party, and avowedly favourable to their claims on this occasion, he declined signing the petition for relief. When urged by his friends upon the subject, he used jocularly to allege, that he could not afford to keep a conscience." For any one to defend prevarication by the example of our Author, would be the most wanton injustice. Paley understood the value of conscience as well as the most upright man could do; for there have been few persons who have passed through life with a character so generally estimable for integrity. In the single instance before us, he behaved with more caution than spirit, more reserve than sincerity. It is much easier to justify his apology, than his conduct. For though it would be illiberal to censure his remark as any thing more culpable than one of those flippant speeches, which the wisest men often utter in the levity of conversation; how can we acquit him for subjecting himself to the necessity of evading by a joke, what he could not answer with reason? If he sincerely thought that the repeal of the subscription would be serviceable to the cause of truth and religious liberty; was it manly and honourable to shelter himself from the open dangers of the contest, and leave them to be encountered entirely by others?

In the controversy which ensued upon the subject, Mr. Paley interfered; but with a discretion, of which others set the example, he concealed his name. In January, 1774, a pamphlet appeared, with the title of "Considerations on the Propriety of requiring a Subscription to Articles of Faith;" which, though published anonymously, was discovered to be from the pen of the Bishop of Carlisle. An anonymous reply, called "An Answer to the Considerations," was written by Dr. Thomas Randolph, president of Corpus Christi College; who in a charge given by him as archdeacon of Oxford in 1771, had vindicated the reasonableness of requiring subscription. Mr. Paley having now an opportunity of asserting his opinions, and at the same time of maintaining the cause of his venerable friend, published a "Defence of the Considerations." This pamphlet, written with a spirit of contemptuous superiority, and in the boldest tone of latitudinarian inquiry, we ascribe to our Author merely in deference to common opinion, which has so assigned it. What were Mr. Paley's mature and dispassionate sentiments upon the questions in agitation, we may collect from his chapter on Subscription, in the third book of his Moral Philosophy, and from the one upon Religious Establishments, in his last book of the same work.

In June, 1774, he was separated from his coadjutor, Mr. Law, who was advanced to a prebendal stall in his father's diocess. Shortly after, our Author himself tasted the first-fruits of the same bishop's patronage, being inducted in May, 1775, to the rectory of Musgrove, in Westmoreland, a small benefice, not more than 80*l.* a year in value.

In 1776, some judicious and interesting *Observations upon the Character and Example of Christ, and the Morality of the Gospel*, were published by Paley at Cambridge. These were originally designed as a summary and appendix to the Bishop of Carlisle's Reflections on the Life and Character of our Saviour.

Mr. Paley soon availed himself of his ecclesiastical preferment, however small, for the purpose of changing his condition. This year, June the 6th, he was married to Miss Jane Hewitt, a young lady of the city of Carlisle, who has been described as both pleasing and handsome. In relinquishing his academical duties, he might reflect with enviable satisfaction upon the conduct he had pursued in the university. A college fellowship had not been to him a post of dozing and unimproving indolence, nor tuition a selfish scheme of personal aggrandizement. He had given his approbation and support to those plans, which were suggested (though without success) for the improvement of university discipline, for diversifying the course of study, and appointing annual examinations. His own college, where his power was less controlled, he raised to an unprecedented eminence by his assiduous, upright, and skilful management. He was now to exchange the office of tutor for the less ostentatious duties of village priest; but great as the transition may seem, it was so far from injuring his comfort, that he often declared that he had passed some of the happiest days of his life at Musgrove. He was an incorrigible disciple of Isaac Walton; and the river Eden flowing near him, offered its stream for the indulgence of his innocent amusement. Exercised by persons of a barren and vacant mind, angling perhaps deserves little milder censure than idling; but when it is followed by one of Paley's ruminating disposition, why may we not honour it with Walton's title of the "Contemplative Man's Recreation?" Our Author certainly was not ashamed of his amusement, for when his portrait was taken by Romney, he was drawn with the insignia of art—rod and line in his hand. He had recourse also to farming for the sake of occupation, but in this project he was quite unsuccessful. "I soon found," said he, "that this would never do; I was a bad farmer, and almost invariably lost."

The Bishop of Carlisle's patronage, though small, descended upon him with rapidity. Before the end of this year (1776,) he was inducted into the vicarage of Dalston in Cumberland, the value of which was about 90*l.* per annum. In September of the following year, he was presented by the dean and chapter of Carlisle to a more substantial benefice, the vicarage of St. Lawrence, Appleby, which produced the annual income of about 200*l.* Having vacated the rectory of Musgrove, he resided six months alternately at Appleby and Dalston.

Before his presentation to Appleby, he had preached in the cathedral of Carlisle, at the episcopal visitation, a sermon upon the necessity of *caution in the use and application of Scripture language*. This was afterward published: and his next work is a pleasing proof of the serious attention which he seems to have paid to the humble but important duties of a parochial minister. Those who discharge the sacred functions of religion, find, perhaps, no part of their office more painful at the first trial, than visiting the sick. At the moment they should guide themselves with the greatest composure, sincerity, and affection, they are most liable to be disturbed by their feelings, and lose the power of adapting their prayers and advice to the condition of different sufferers. Feeling, we may believe, such embarrassments in the exercise of his own duties at Appleby, our Author published a very serviceable manual, called, *The Clergyman's Companion in visiting the Sick*. This work, compiled from the book of Common Prayer, and the writings of eminent divines, was at first printed anonymously, and has passed through numerous editions.

He rendered another service to the ministers of the church, and to the junior part especially, in publishing an *admonitory Sermon to the young Clergy of the Diocess of Carlisle, preached at a general Ordination holden at Rose Castle, July* 29th, 1781. In this discourse the Author does not dissipate the force of his advice in loose and general exhortation: he is minute enough to be useful, descending to those particular vices which are most dangerous to the sacred profession, and enumerating the habits and qualifications which are its chief ornament. Those who are preparing for holy orders should have recourse to this work, as a correct standard by which they may examine their resolutions. Until they can hope and determine scrupulously to conform their actions to it, they should not venture to assume the gown, which they are likely to dishonour.

Every friend of merit will rejoice to see dignities and emoluments alighting

upon our Author. In June, 1780, he was appointed to a prebend in the cathedral of Carlisle, productive to him of about 400*l.* annually. His friend Mr. Law being elevated to the Irish bench, as bishop of Clonfert, vacated the archdeaconry of Carlisle, to which Mr. Paley succeeded in August, 1782. In the diocese of Carlisle, the archdeacon holds merely a nominal office, with the possession of a small living: all the duties of the station are performed by the chancellor. Upon the death of Dr. Richard Burn, the well-known author of the Justice of the Peace, and who for his compilation of ecclesiastical law was made chancellor of Carlisle, Mr. Paley was advanced to the usual labours, as well as the title, of an archdeacon. This took place in the year 1785, and the union of the two dignities brought him an annual augmentation of income of about 300*l.* The vicarage of Appleby was resigned, when he became archdeacon, and his residence was partly at Dalston, and partly at his prebendal house. He accompanied his friend to his episcopal residence in Ireland, having first preached at his consecration in the Castle Chapel at Dublin. The subject which he chose was, *a distinction of orders in the church, defended upon principles of public utility.*

An exaggerated account of one of his conversations gained him for a time the credit of a feat of wit which he never performed. "A report had been long in circulation, that Mr. Paley, being appointed to preach before the university of Cambridge on the day when Mr. Pitt, after his elevation to the premiership in 1784, made his first appearance at St. Mary's, chose this singular, but appropriate text; 'There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?' John, vi. 9. A lady who had seen this story in the newspaper, once asked the facetious divine if it was true. 'Why, no, madam,' replied he, 'I certainly never preached such a sermon, I was not at Cambridge at the time; but I remember that one day, when I was riding out with a friend in the neighbourhood of Carlisle, and we were talking about the bustle and confusion which Mr. Pitt's appearance would then cause to the university, I said, that if I had been there, and asked to preach on the occasion, I would have taken that passage for my text.'"

Hitherto our Author had published nothing but such small and fugitive pieces, as would scarcely have made his reputation more lasting than that of hundreds of upright and learned divines, who, however useful may have been their labours, are almost entirely forgotten in a few generations. In 1785 appeared his "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy;" a work alone important enough, even amidst the innumerable volumes of the English language, to rescue the writer from oblivion. Paley's modesty led him to distrust his abilities to interest the public mind in discussions so alien to the common taste, as questions of abstract ethics. His friend, the Bishop of Clonfert, estimated his powers more justly, from his knowledge of their effects in the university. By his solicitation, that system of morals, with which Paley had fortified the minds of his pupils, was given to the world digested and amplified amid the leisure and by the experience of its Author. When the work was ready to be committed to the press, an altercation arose about its value; Mr. Faulder, the publisher, consenting to give but 250*l.* for what the Author thought it just to demand 300*l.* The delay that was created, was a most fortunate circumstance for Mr. Paley; for during the interim, a bookseller from Carlisle, calling upon Mr. Robinson of Paternoster-row, was commissioned by him to offer 1000*l.* for the copyright. Upon receiving this proposal, Paley wrote with trembling agitation to the Bishop of Clonfert, who was in London, and was intrusted with the sale of the book. "Never," he used to confess, "did I suffer so much anxious fear, as on this occasion, lest my friend should have concluded the bargain with Mr. Faulder, before my letter could reach him." The contract not having been struck, Mr. F. amazed no doubt as much as Tarquin at the last demand of the Sibyl, quadrupled his offer of 250*l.* and in a short time had reason to exult at his purchase. "Little did I think that I should ever make a thousand pounds by any book of mine," was the sincere and modest exclamation of the Author.

The chief excellences of this treatise are, the strength and simplicity of the principle upon which he establishes his reasonings, and the adaptation of the

whole subject to the circumstances of actual life. The rule of human conduct in all cases he acknowledges to be the will of God; and when this can be discovered from the express declarations of the Deity, he always has recourse to Scripture. Paley's system, therefore, is one of Christian ethics. Those who reject revelation, may build, as they can, their systems without it; and try how much weight their unauthorized tenets will possess with the bulk of mankind. But for such as receive Christianity, to decline the appeal to scriptural authorities, Paley considers as great a defect, as if a commentator on the laws of England should content himself with stating upon each head, the common law of the land, without taking notice of the statute law, and acts of parliament.

When the Scriptures give us no specific direction, the will of God is to be inferred, by what we can discover of his designs and disposition from his works; or, as it is usually called, by the light of nature. The numerous proofs which we possess of the divine benevolence, lead us to establish this rule, that the method of coming at the will of God, concerning any action, by the light of nature, is to inquire into the tendency of that action to promote or diminish the *general* happiness. Such is the amount of Paley's doctrine of expediency. Expediency is not his primary rule of conduct, but only laid down as the most certain method, when Scripture is silent, of ascertaining the law by which we should always abide, namely, the will of God. The utility too of actions and institutions (he carefully insists) is to be estimated by their *general* consequences; that is, by asking what would ensue, if the same kind of actions were generally permitted. Nothing can be more calumnious than to fix any stigma of selfishness to the Author's doctrine: his aim is to develop what is *universally* expedient; to teach us in all our calculations to consider the interests of society; and to seek our individual benefit in the common welfare. A man who is perplexed with doubts, if he allowed himself to be guided by Paley, would first endeavour to calm his mind by following the instructions to be met with in Scripture; if these are not detailed so minutely as to reach his case, our Author explains the process of reasoning, by which he may hope to arrive at conclusions agreeable to the will of God.

Paley has carefully abstained from inventing difficulties, and embarrassing his readers with unnecessary scruples. He is not like an injudicious commentator, perplexing what is clear, and overlooking what is obscure. His book was designed to inform the judgment, and establish correct principles in those cases where men are daily required to deliver their opinions, or determine their conduct. Disencumbering his subject of all superfluous weight, he has examined, he declares,* no doubts, discussed no obscurities, encountered no errors, adverted to no controversies, but what he had seen actually to exist.

A work so perspicuous and useful, in which a number of important questions are discussed in a manner neither jejune nor prolix, could scarcely fail to win popular notice in an enlightened country. Paley enjoyed all the triumphs of an author, in witnessing no less than fifteen editions of his work pass through the press. He saw it also introduced as a book of examination in the university of Cambridge. This distinction, which it has not lost at the present day, was first conferred upon it by Mr. Jones, senior tutor of Trinity College, at the time he was moderater, in the years 1786 and 1787. In the revision of his work, our Author made no material alterations, but contented himself with verbal corrections. He was never induced to reply to any objections which were urged against different parts of his theory; but having weighed his opinions with care, and advanced them clearly and with moderation, he relinquished them to whatever fate truth might assign them.

In 1787, he was deprived of his friend and patron, the Bishop of Carlisle, who died at Rose castle, on the 14th of August, at the great age of eighty-four. Mr. Paley, several years after, paid a tribute of respect and gratitude to his diocesan's memory, by compiling a short memoir of his life, which may be found in Hutchinson's History of Cumberland, and the Encyclopædia Britannica.

We are next to view Mr. Paley engaged in a singular task; in allaying doubts and overcoming scruples, by which (though he added a member to the church) he obtained such a triumph as few will be tempted to envy. The event to which

* Preface to Moral Philosophy.

we allude, will be best explained by the correspondence between our Author and Dr. Percival, a physician of Manchester.

From Dr. PERCIVAL to the Rev. Archdeacon PALEY.

"Manchester, June 20, 1788.

"What apology shall I offer for the liberty I am now presuming to take with you? The very high respect which I entertain for your talents and character, operates upon me at once as an incitement and restraint; and whilst I am solicitous to avail myself of your counsel and assistance, I am diffident in requesting them, from a consciousness of having no claim to be honoured with either. But the occasion requires a sacrifice of feeling to judgment; and I shall trust to your goodness to excuse, if peculiar reasons do not justify, my present application to you.

"My oldest son, whom I intended for the profession of physic, by his residence at St. John's College, and connexions in Cambridge, has had his views changed, and is now strongly inclined to go into the church. But previous to his final decision, he wishes to settle his mind on several important topics comprehended in the Articles of faith. The chapter on Religious Establishments, in your excellent System of Moral and Political Philosophy, has had great weight with him; and he has this morning expressed to me an earnest desire to have the benefit of your personal instructions, on points so interesting to his future peace, prosperity, and usefulness. Is it possible for him to enjoy this singular privilege, for the space of a few weeks? I shall cordially acquiesce in any terms that you may prescribe, and with a grateful sense of obligation to you.

"I am a dissenter, but actuated by the same spirit of catholicism which you possess. An establishment I approve; the church of England, in many respects, I honour; and should think it my duty to enter instantly into her communion, were the plan which you have proposed in you tenth chapter,* carried into execution."

From the Rev. Archdeacon PALEY to Dr. PERCIVAL.

"Carlisle, June 25, 1788.

"I desire you to accept my thanks for the many obliging expressions of respect which your letter contains. If the state of my engagements had allowed me to spare a few weeks to a personal conference with your son, upon any subject of doubt which he should chance to propose, it would have been a pleasure to me to have complied with your wishes, from a sense both of private obligation and of public esteem. As my time is at present very little in my own power, and my being at home very uncertain, I know not how I can contribute to your son's satisfaction in any better way than by sending you a few additional explanatory observations upon what I have written in my chapter, entitled 'Of Subscription.'

1st. "If any person understand and believe all the several propositions in the thirty-nine Articles, and in the liturgy and homilies which they recognize, there can be no place for doubt.

"2d. If a person think that every such proposition is probable, or as probable as the contrary or any other supposition on the subject, there can be no just cause of scruple.

"3d. If a person, after using due inquiry, understand some of the propositions in the thirty-nine Articles, but not all, and assent to those propositions which he does understand, I think he may safely subscribe.

"4th. If a person think any part of the discipline, government, rites, or worship, of the church of England, to be *forbidden*, he certainly ought not to subscribe; but certain parts of these being not commanded, or not the best possible, or not good and useful, or not reasonable (for many things may be absurd, and yet very innocent,) is not, in my opinion, a sufficient ground of objection.

"5th. If there be certain particular propositions in the Articles, which he disbelieves, although he assent to the main part of them, as well as to the lawfulness of the established government and worship of the church, then arises the case in which the principal difficulty consists. And as to this case, I find no reason, upon much re-consideration, to question the principle I have laid down, viz. 'that if the intention and view of the legislature, which imposed subscription, be satisfied, it is enough.' But here comes a doubt, whether we can be permitted to go out of the terms of subscription, that is to say, the words of

* Book vi. of Moral Philosophy.

the statute, to collect the intention of the legislature, or not. If we look to the terms of the subscription, they seem to require a positive assent to each and every proposition contained in the Articles, so as that believing any one such proposition to be untrue, is inconsistent with subscription. If we may be allowed to judge of the design and object of the legislature from the nature of the case, and the ordinary maxims of human conduct, it appears likely that they meant to fence out such sects and characters as were hostile and dangerous to the new establishment, viz. Popery, and the tenets of the continental Anabaptists; rather than expect, what they must have known to be impracticable, the exact agreement of so many minds in such a great number of controverted propositions.

"Now, concerning this doubt, viz. whether we may or not go out of the terms of the statute to collect the design of the legislature (which question I think involves the whole difficulty,) I can only say, that a court of justice, in interpreting written laws, certainly could not, and ought not; for any such liberty would give to courts of justice the power of making laws; but I do not see that any danger or insecurity will be introduced by allowing this liberty to private persons. I mean, that private persons acting under the direction of a law may be said to do their duty, if they act up to what they believe to be the design of the legislature in making the law; whether their opinion of that design be founded upon the terms of the statute alone, or upon the nature of the subject and the actual probability.

"If I had the pleasure of your son's presence, I know not whether I ought to say any thing more. It is the office of an adviser in such cases to suggest general principles. The application of these principles to each person's case, must be made by the person himself, who alone knows the state of his own thoughts. I have only to add, that Burnet's seems a fair explication of the sense of the Articles."

Paley's arguments, we think, will satisfy none but lax consciences. He acknowledges that the terms of the subscription seem to require a positive assent to each and every proposition contained in the Articles:—if then the terms are clear and express, why need we go out of them, to collect the design of the legislature? Is not the legislature most competent to explain its own intention? If it plainly declares what it demands of the subscriber, has he any authority to guess and infer that it demands something much less than its own terms imply? Paley enjoins in another place* a far more scrupulous mode of reasoning. "In every question of conduct, where one side is doubtful, and the other side safe, we are bound to take the safe side."—"We assert, that the action concerning which we doubt, whatever it may be in itself, or to another, would, in us, whilst this doubt remains upon our minds, be certainly *sinful*."

Mr. Thomas Basnett Percival, the gentleman whose doubts were the cause of the preceding correspondence, entered the church, notwithstanding he had been educated in the Arian tenets. These of course (for we impeach neither his nor Mr. Paley's sincerity) we must suppose were abandoned: for how could any one, who held the Arian sentiments, pronounce, before God and in the public assemblies of the church, the Nicene creed, which was compiled in express condemnation of the heresy of Arius?

Upon a vacancy in the mastership of Jesus College, Cambridge, in the year 1789, the situation was offered to Mr. Paley by Dr. York; who, as bishop of Ely, had the absolute appointment. This honour Paley declined; but always, it seems, maintained a strict reserve concerning his motives for such a refusal. Mr. Meadley, our Author's first biographer, has upon this subject provoked the chastisement of the Quarterly Reviewer: and as we are bound to collect the truth from every quarter we are able, we must permit the learned critic to speak for himself.† "And first with respect to his refusal of the mastership of Jesus College—'The whole of his motives for this refusal have never yet been clearly ascertained, nor perhaps were they fully communicated even to his most intimate friends (here we agree with the biographer.) To one gentleman, indeed, he stated a conviction that he should be scarcely able to remain a single month in office (meaning, probably, the vice-chancellorship, which would have followed the other)

* Moral Philosophy, book i. chap. vii. † No. xviii. p. 394.

without quarrelling with Mr. Pitt. Mr. Paley, who was no time-server, seems to have been unwilling to place himself in a situation in which unworthy compliances might be either expected or required.' This is a foul libel on the dead and the living—on the minister, and on the heads of houses: the first, as a haughty tyrant; the second, as a set of unprincipled and self-interested slaves. It is neither a duty incumbent on ministers nor men to heap rewards on those who thwart and oppose their measures; but independence and hostility are not convertible terms, and in that station we undertake to say, that a man like Paley, with all his independence of spirit, would have held no such course as to debar him from preferment. Besides, the surmise is negatived by facts, as it is well known that, about the same time, a man of far less merit, and by principle as well as connexion actively hostile to the court, was promoted by the crown to the mastership of another college, with an express reservation of his party and principles: and the biographers might have known, that when Paley's first and best friend heard of the refusal, his observation was, that he had 'missed a mitre.'"

In 1790 appeared the *Horæ Paulinæ, or the Truth of the Scripture History of St. Paul evinced, by a Comparison of the Epistles which bear his name, with the Acts of the Apostles, and with one another.* This work will be valued by sagacious judges as the most ingenious and original of all our Author's productions. It has been translated into the German language; but has never obtained in this country that general perusal with which Paley's larger works have been honoured. This comparative neglect is to be attributed not to the execution of the work, which is admirable, but to the subtile nature of the proof which the design admitted. Although the total result of the argument is an accumulation of evidence that is almost irresistible; yet the proofs, singly, are established by a recondite criticism, by minute collations, and verbal peculiarities, which few have delicacy of taste enough to relish. This publication is the only one in which Paley seems not to have adapted himself exactly to the tone of the public mind; but he is repaid for the neglect of the many, by the approbation of the few that are learned and critical readers.

It is gratifying to behold the man, whose penetrating mind could enlighten the abstrusest difficulties of philosophy, cheerfully engaged in the humblest works of utility; the writer who could instruct divines and scholars, employed like the amiable Dr. Watts in reducing knowledge to the level of the most youthful capacity. In the centre of Paley's great philosophical and theological works, we meet with the following publication: *The Young Christian instructed in Reading and in the Principles of Religion; compiled for the Use of the Sunday Schools in Carlisle.* This little work, however, subjected our Author to the charge of plagiarism, and involved him in a dispute which is too amusing, from its ludicrous solemnity, not to be given in the genuine words of the combatants. Mr. Robertson, the person who thought himself injured, made the following grave appeal to the editor of the Gentleman's Magazine:*

"Thou shalt not steal."———*Catechism by Paley*, p. 34.

"Mr. Urban, Marlborough-street, Feb. 12.

"When the press teems with innumerable publications in every department of literature, it is no wonder that many of them are mere compilations; the observations, arguments, and opinions, of preceding writers, thrown together into one general mass, and presented to the public under some new and ostentatious title. We have volumes after volumes, collected from the works of the most eminent authors, filled with heterogeneous fragments, which distract and confound the reader's memory and imagination, and consequently leave no useful impression on the mind. Some dealers in this piratical commerce take every opportunity they can seize, for converting the works of others to their own emolument. With this view, they mangle and pillage them in an arbitrary manner, till they have either made the original composition appear to the utmost disadvantage, or devoured it as rapaciously as the harpies devoured the provisions of Æneas and his companions.

"Though, as the author of two or three humble publications, I did not imagine that I should be exposed to piratical depredations, yet I have found myself

* Vol. lxii. 1792.

deceived. I did not recollect, that a petty thief will steal a scraper———; Some time after the appearance of 'An Introduction to the Study of Polite Literature,' a certain reverend gentleman in the north republished the greatest part of that tract for the use of Sunday-schools, and others in general. To this compilation he has prefixed his name and his titles of honour, 'William Paley, M. A. Archdeacon of Carlisle.' But he was not condescended to make the *least* acknowledgment, or to offer the least apology for his plagiarism, though it constitutes the first thirty pages of his publication; to which he has subjoined the Catechism, a few pages of Scripture, two or three prayers, some *divine songs*, and other pious *collectanea*, which would not have answered his purpose, or been saleable, without the former part.

"I think myself amply justified in thus mentioning the editor of this disingenuous publication, as it continues to be sold (notwithstanding a *former* remonstrance) by his booksellers in Carlisle and Bond-street!* In his next edition the conscientious Archdeacon is desired to inform his readers, how such an invasion of private property can be justified on the 'principles of moral and political philosophy.' As the ingenious young students of the floating academy are subject to penal statutes, it is but reasonable, that all pilferers in the republic of letters should be chastised, in proportion to their demerits. Your impartiality, Mr. Urban, and regard for ingenuous learning, will, I hope, induce you to give these strictures a place in your magazine; not for the sake of the writer, but for the most important purposes,—the discouragement of plagiarism, and protection of literary property. "Yours, &c. J. ROBERTSON."

"MR. URBAN, "Carlisle, May 18, 1792.

"In the Gentleman's Magazine for February, p. 131, I am accused by the Rev. Mr. Robertson of invading his property in a certain work, published by him under the title of 'An Introduction to the Study of Polite Literature.' As you have thought proper to admit into your miscellany Mr. Robertson's complaint, I expect, from your regard to justice, that you will find a place for my answer. Your readers, then, must first of all be told, what, from the air of importance which is given to the charge, they would not readily imagine, that this same 'Introduction to the Study of Polite Literature,' is a spelling-book; that one entire page of the original, for the crime of purloining which I am thus brought before the public, is verbally and literally as follows:

LESSON III.

A bag A nag—A bun A gun—A cap A map—A nut A hut--A mat A hat--A spy A fly

and that, except some short directions for reading, all the pages taken by me are of the same kind with this specimen, proceeding, as is the manner of primers and spelling-books, from words of one syllable to words of more, and from polysyllables to sentences of different lengths. I mention this, not to detract from the merits of Mr. Robertson's performance, which is a very good one of the sort, but in order to shew that reputation of authorship could hardly be my motive for the theft. The truth and the whole truth of the transaction is this:—About seven years ago, when Sunday-schools were first set up in Carlisle, I was desired to prepare some small tracts which might be put into the hands of the children and the masters. The point aimed at was, to afford as much instruction for as little money as possible. With this view, it was necessary to make one part answer the purpose of a spelling-book, and the other to contain the elements of religious knowledge. I executed the office of a compiler in the first part, by marking out to the printer some pages of an anonymous spelling-book, which had accidentally come into my hands as a present to one of my children. In the second part there is nothing of my own except a piece of four pages, entitled, 'A short History of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ.' The rest is made up of portions of Scripture, selected by me, chiefly from the Gospels, an old tract of Lord Chief Justice Hale's, two prayers, two hymns of Dr. Watts's, a piece of Dr. Stonehouse's taken from the Society's tracts, and another of Mr. Gilpin's. These two last-named gentlemen have not complained, probably, indeed, continue ignorant, of the injury that has been done them. Should they come to know it, I am persuaded that, instead of resenting the liberty which I have taken with their pious writings, they will rejoice to find them

* This fraudulent publication, entitled "The Young Christian Instructed in Reading," &c. bears some appearance and symptoms of guilt in its front. No London bookseller's name, though published in the metropolis!

made, in any shape, or by any hand, useful and accessible to the poor. My name as the *compiler* (for that is the word employed) was placed in the title-page, because the bookseller refused to print the book without it; and it is placed there in the manner, so far as I know, commonly adopted by clergymen, for I am conscious of no affectation upon that head.

"Such was the birth of the little compilation which has provoked this angry attack. A few months after it had been printed, Mr. Faulder of Bond-street asked my leave to put forth an edition of it in London. I told him the first part was taken from a work, which, as I now understood, though I did not know it at the time, had been published by Mr. Robertson of Marlborough-street; and that he must apply to Mr. Robertson for permission. Mr. Faulder made his application, and was refused; and upon that refusal, by my positive injunction, desisted from his design. If it has been printed and sold in London, or any where else, except in this neighbourhood, since that time, it is entirely without my participation or knowledge.

"Mr. Robertson says, that the collection 'would not *have answered my purpose*, or been saleable, without the former part.'—What purpose had I to be answered, but that which is expressed in the title-page, 'the Use of the Sunday-schools in Carlisle?' I never gained a penny by the publication: so much otherwise, that I paid the publisher his full price for every copy that I gave away. I am at this moment ready to convey to Mr. Robertson, or his assignee, my title, if he thinks I have any to the work, and all interest in it whatsoever.

"Mr. Robertson has not said that the sale of one copy of his book has been hindered by the appearance of mine. From the different quality of the articles, I am convinced that no such effect can follow. His is a fair volume, a beautiful type, and a fine paper, adapted in all respects to the use of genteel boarding-schools, and the nurseries of genteel families. Of all the low-priced helps to education with which parish children and charity-schools were ever furnished, mine, in these particulars, is the meanest. The two books, therefore, are calculated for a totally different description of purchasers. They can never meet in the market; no person who would buy his book would be content with mine.

"This is my defence; but a part of my story is yet untold. Not long after this little book was published, and as soon as I knew Mr. Robertson's sentiments about it, the substance of what I have here alleged was drawn up by me in terms as respectful as I could frame them, and, being so drawn up, was communicated to him by a friend to us both. Although I did not believe that I had injured his property, I was truly sorry that I had offended, and that also unknowingly, a gentleman with whom I possessed a slight degree of acquaintance, whose hard fortune in his profession I have often lamented, and whose literary merits entitle him to regard from every scholar. Mr. Robertson ought not, therefore, to have said 'that I have not condescended to make the least acknowledgment, or offer the least apology, for my plagiarism.' I did offer an apology, not indeed in print, which, I doubt not, is what he means, but by a mode of correspondence which, in my judgment, much better became both the subject and the parties.

"And this, Mr. Urban, leads me to express my regret, that there should be one column in the Gentleman's Magazine which hath no employment more worthy of it than to convey to the public, what the public have no concern in—a beggarly dispute about a few pages of a spelling-book, by the stealing of which (for so let it be called) neither the plagiarist hath gained, nor the proprietor lost, a fraction of a farthing. "Yours, &c. W. PALEY."

This year, 1792, Mr. Paley was presented by the dean and chapter of Carlisle to the vicarage of Addingham, near Great Salkeld, the value of which was about 140*l.* a year.

At the commencement of the French revolution, during the violent commotion of the public mind, and the bold dissemination of wild and seditious opinions, he published an ingenious tract called, *Reasons for Contentment, addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public*. With a view of restraining his countrymen from any schemes of hasty reform, he printed, as a separate pamphlet, the seventh chapter of his sixth book of Moral Philosophy; in which he defends the present state of our representation in the house of commons. To this "Essay upon the British Constitution" he prefixed the following advertisement:

"What has passed in Europe, under the immediate observation of this country, during the last four years, hath naturally drawn the thoughts of the reflect-

ing part of the English community to the constitution of their government. The conduct also of some principal writers upon both sides of the question, hath tended to excite, not only the attention, but the passions, of the public, and to force the subject upon the thoughts of multitudes, whose minds would, otherwise, have been very little disposed to entertain political speculations. I cannot, however, persuade myself, that the friends of public tranquillity have any thing to fear. The body of the British people appear to me to be satisfied with their condition; to be intent upon their various employments; and to be tasting the sweets of industry and order in the increased and increasing gains of almost every occupation. This state of the country is a strong security for its internal peace. Nevertheless, since these discussions are undoubtedly become very general, it is expedient that whatever any one has to propose, should be proposed in a form fitted for general reading. This reason hath induced me to publish the following apology for the British constitution in a separate pamphlet; as the work, from which it is taken, is hindered by its size and price from finding its way into the hands of many who might receive advantage from the perusal. Some late notices of that work, much too honourable for me to repeat, have procured to it a degree of regard, which will probably obtain readers for this part of it. I trust also that it will be a recommendation of the principles here delivered, that they were not made for the times or the occasion; to serve any purpose or any party; that they were committed to writing ten years ago, and under circumstances, which, if they were known, would exclude all suspicion of insincerity or design. The opinions I then formed were formed upon the best consideration I was able to give to the subject of which I treated. Since the publication of the 'Principles of Moral Philosophy,' I have written nothing, and, to speak the truth, have thought little, upon political questions; for interesting as they may seem to be, or are, my age, and still more my health and profession, have taught me that there are other studies, in comparison with which even these are unimportant. "Carlisle, June 29th, 1792. W. P."

Although Mr. Paley had lost his friend Dr. Edmund Law, he still found a friend in the Bishop of Carlisle. Dr. Vernon,* while in possession of that northern see, offered him the vicarage of Stanwix, which was accepted; and Dalston in consequence resigned, Paley with characteristic frankness thus explained his motive to a clerical friend: "Why, Sir, I had two or three reasons for taking Stanwix in exchange; first, it saved me double housekeeping, as Stanwix was within twenty minutes' walk of my house in Carlisle; secondly, it was fifty pounds a year more in value; and thirdly, I began to find my stock of sermons coming over again too fast."

Early in the year 1794, his *View of the Evidences of Christianity* was given to the public. In this luminous and comprehensive work, the historical evidence for the authenticity of our Scriptures, selected from the volumes of Dr. Lardner, is arranged with clearness, and stated to the reader with the utmost force and precision. Many persons are wearied into impatience by the number of pages he has occupied in proving the sufferings of the first propagators of Christianity. But as this fact is the basis of the work, it was requisite that it should be undeniably established: superfluity of proof may be tedious, but deficiency would have been fatal. To those who shrink from the labours of weighing the detail of historical evidence, the two last parts of the work will be more interesting than the first. It is impossible to arise from a careful perusal of the whole, we will not say, without conviction (for that may be impeded by many obstructions in the reader's mind,) but without feeling a sincere admiration of the tenets of Christianity, and the character of its Founder; and without being impressed at the time with this sentiment, That however miraculous the truths of our religion may appear, we must assent to propositions equally miraculous, before we can conclude it to be false.

No one can accommodate a system of evidences to the doubts, capacity, and indolence, of every sceptic. The antecedent credibility of miracles is perhaps a difficulty that has struck every reflecting mind. Upon this subject, Paley's Preparatory Considerations, in which he exposes the sophistry of Mr. Hume, deserve the most serious perusal. Those who will not submit to read the numerous pages which follow (for men who are most petulant in their doubts seldom display much patience in attempting to resolve them,) will find the question of religion brought

* The present Archbishop of York.

to a narrow issue in *Leslie's Short and Easy Method with the Deists*. When the advocates of infidelity have logically answered this epitome of evidence, the whole of which is comprised in less than forty pages, the world will be ready to acknowledge their claim to that character of superior penetration which they arrogantly assume.

The publication of the "*Evidences*" was most beneficial to the Author: it dissolved instantaneously the coldness of episcopal reserve which Paley had hitherto experienced. The writer of the Moral Philosophy and the Horæ Paulinæ seemed to possess substantial claims upon the hierarchy, which is invested with patronage solely for the remuneration of learning and piety: but the freedom of some of Paley's sentiments might for a time perplex the most conscientious prelates, and make them hesitate how far it was expedient to bestow upon him any conspicuous marks of ecclesiastical favour. The appearance of the "Evidences" overcame all scruples—and minor discrepances of opinion were sacrificed in admiration of his steady zeal and unrivalled talent in defending the cause of revealed truth. Dr. Porteus, the learned and amiable bishop of London, was the first to reward the advocate of religion, by instituting him, in August, 1794, to the prebend of St. Pancras, which is one of the most valuable in the cathedral of St. Paul's. In January of the following year, he was elevated to the sub-deanery of Lincoln, by Dr. Pretyman, bishop of that diocess.* This was a valuable piece of preferment, producing about 700*l.* a year. Another as lucrative soon followed from the Hon. Dr. Barrington, the present bishop of Durham; who without solicitation generously presented to our Author, who was a stranger to him, the rectory of Bishop-Wearmouth. When, full of gratitude, Paley waited upon his benefactor to express his sincere acknowledgments; "Not one word more of this, Sir, (exclaimed the noble prelate;) be assured that you cannot have greater pleasure in accepting the living of Bishop-Wearmouth, than I have in offering it to you." The prebend of Carlisle, and the vicarage of Stanwix being vacated, Dr. Vernon relinquished his right of presentation to the first in favour of the Bishop of Lincoln, and to the other in favour of the Bishop of Durham. Thus four distinguished prelates came forward almost simultaneously in order to reward talent, and dignify virtue. Three of them at this day survive the object of their patronage; and when the numbers who are delighted with the works of Paley inquire who were his rewarders, their names are remembered, and their liberality and discrimination applauded.

With his new dignities our Author assumed a new title. He took his degree of Doctor of Divinity in the year 1795, and preached the commencement sermon before the university, upon the dangers incidental to the *Clerical Character*. In his *Concio ad Clerum*, or Latin discourse delivered as an exercise preparatory to the degree, he made an unfortunate blunder, which gave rise to a *jeu d'esprit*, which many in the republic of wit would consider it treasonable not to record. Being no very skilful prosodian, he pronounced the word *profugus* with the penultima long: and lest this grievous offence against the Muses should be forgotten, it was ridiculed in the following distich:

"Italiam fato profŭgus Lavinia venit
Litora."
Errat Virgilius—forte profugus erat.

Dr. Paley was inducted into the living of Bishop-Wearmouth, on the 14th March, 1795. Resigning his chancellorship, the vicarage of Addingham, and whatever duties required his presence in the diocess of Carlisle, he made his principal abode at his new rectory. Three months every year he was obliged to reside at Lincoln, in his dignity of sub-dean. He was now in possession of every thing that could gratify his taste, and give comfort and serenity to his declining years. His parsonage-house and grounds at Bishop-Wearmouth were commodious and agreeable: his income was large enough to allow him to indulge every liberal wish, and his bright and well-earned reputation would be to him a constant source of pleasing recollections. To confirm his tranquillity, and exclude any cause of acrimony and contention with his parishioners, he accepted for life an annual compensation of 700*l.* a year for his tithes. His glebe-lands, together with a limestone quarry, were let much below their value: so that notwithstanding his benefice was estimated at 1200*l.* a year, it probably did not produce to him above two-thirds

* Now Dr. Tomline, Bishop of Winchester.

of that sum. Happy would many an incumbent consider himself, if he could preserve even this proportion between the just and the actual product of his living. As to the clamours which we hear about the rapacity and exactions of the clergy, some may raise them to cast an odious stigma upon the sacred profession, others to shelter themselves in the crime of fraudulently withholding ecclesiastical dues; but can any impartial man give them credit, if he thinks for a moment on the relative situation of the incumbent and his parishioners? When, amongst equals, the many have directly an opposite interest to the one; is it difficult to foretell which party will be obliged to make concessions? If a clergyman, standing alone in the parish, can soothe the sullen, subdue the avaricious, and reconcile the dissenting, with so much success, as to make them rob themselves to aggrandize him; surely his eloquence and address must be as marvellous as any thing related by historians or poets. If this generosity, so injurious to themselves, is practised by various parishes in England year after year; either human nature has been libelled by the moralists who inveigh against its selfishness, or the clergy possess the art of Amphion and Orpheus, who could move stones, and stop the course of rivers! In the case of Dr. Paley, the parish soon discovered that, on account of the increasing value of land, they had made a composition most beneficial to themselves; but we are not informed, that they expressed any solicitude to re-adjust it upon a scale more equitable to the rector. He was content, and shewed no chagrin at the contract he had made; although it may be doubted, whether the lessees would have been equally forbearing, if they had relinquished as many pounds, as their pastor did hundreds.

Unwilling to enjoy his good fortune without participation, Dr. Paley married a second time, on the 14th December, 1795. His first wife died in May of the year 1791, leaving an issue of four sons and four daughters. His second lady was Miss Dobinson of Carlisle. He now often indulged in social visits both at Bishop-Wearmouth and at Lincoln. He acquitted himself in the duties of hospitality liberally, but without ostentation: for though his disposition made him enjoy society with zest, his prudence restrained him from being injured by its splendour, or embarrassed with its frivolity.

In the midst of private pleasures he undertook to discharge a public function of a nature entirely new to him. By the request of the Bishop of Durham, he consented to enrol himself on the commission of the peace, and assume an office for which he was eminently fitted, both by his natural sagacity and legal knowledge. His temper, however, in the duties of a magistrate, appears not to have been equal to his other qualifications; for he has been condemned, we know not how justly, for too much warmth and irascibility. An effort which he made, for the greater purity of public morals, deserves much commendation. To check intemperance, and habits of prodigality among the lower orders, he attempted to diminish the number of public-houses, and to introduce more caution in the granting of licenses. His laudable wishes were frustrated, not from any want of zeal on his part, but from not being seconded by the due co-operation of the other magistrates.

There is an incident related, in which his humanity is as conspicuous as his judgment. "During the cry of invasion, which followed the renewal of hostilities with France in 1803, a young man, residing in the neighbourhood of Sunderland, without any regular introduction, or apparent object, fell under the suspicion of being a spy. The rumour quickly spread, and obtained so much credit, that the general of division, commanding in that neighbourhood, became seriously alarmed, and applied to Dr. Paley for a warrant to apprehend him, at a very late hour of the night. The prudent magistrate, however, not so easily imposed on by so vague a story, saw at once the indelicacy of arresting, at such an unseasonable hour, a stranger against whom no overt act could be adduced; but on the following day, when the general and his suite were invited to a conference on the subject, sent him a civil message to attend. The young man immediately appeared, and by a steady though confidential disclosure of his name and circumstances, soon convinced the whole party, that the public had no cause of apprehension, since his present concealment originated solely in a domestic misunderstanding. Dr. Paley, indeed, was so much pleased with his good sense and apparent ingenuousness, that he immediately offered him any pecuniary or other assistance which he

might in his present circumstances require, advising him, at the same time, to a speedy reconciliation with his family."

Dr. Paley enjoyed the gratification of having both his parents witnesses of his literary fame and honourable success in life. His mother did not die till the year 1796; the father, who had predicted the eminence of his son, still later. This gentleman, who was one of the most veteran of schoolmasters, was also considered by Dr. Paley as the oldest beneficed clergyman in the kingdom; as he had possessed the vicarage of Helpstone no less than sixty-four years. To the memory of this useful man and his consort, a small brass plate is fixed in Giggleswick church, with the following inscription:

Here lie interred,
the Rev. WILLIAM PALEY, B. A.
fifty-four years Master of this Free School,
who died September the 29th, 1799, aged 88 years.
Also, Elizabeth, Wife of the Rev. William Paley.
who died March 9, 1796, aged 83 years.

Dr. Paley soon received a severe intimation, that the son was hastening to the tomb after the father. In the year 1800, a violent nephralgic disorder, attended with melæna, incapacitated him for the performance of his clerical duties. He was seized with a second attack the following spring at Lincoln, and in 1802 his complaint disabled him from keeping his usual residence in that city. He was persuaded to have recourse to the waters of Buxton; and the moments allowed him by every intermission of pain, he cheerfully devoted to the completion of his last work, his Natural Theology. Dr. Fenwick, of Durham, in his *Sketch of the Professional Life and Character of Dr. Clarke*, has given the warmest testimony to the fortitude of our Author.

"That truly eminent man was then engaged in finishing his Natural Theology; but the completion of that great undertaking was frequently interrupted by severe accessions of a painful disorder, under which he had long laboured, and which has since proved fatal. Dr. Clarke often expressed his admiration at the fortitude with which he bore the most painful attacks, and at the readiness, and even cheerfulness, with which, on the first respite from pain, he resumed his literary labours. When it is considered that the twenty-sixth chapter of his work was written under these circumstances, what he has said of the *alleviation of pain* acquires additional weight. It is not a philosopher in the full enjoyment of health, who talks lightly of an evil which he may suppose at a distance. When Dr. Paley speaks of the power which pain has '*of shedding a satisfaction over intervals of ease, which few enjoyments exceed;*' and assures us, '*that a man resting from severe pain, is, for the time, in possession of feelings which undisturbed health cannot impart;*' the sentiment flowed from his own feelings. He was himself that man; and it is consolatory, amidst the numerous diseases to which the human frame is liable, to find how compatible they are with a certain degree of comfort, and even enjoyment. Something may indeed be attributed, in Dr. Paley, to a vigour of intellect, which is allotted to very few; but it cannot be doubted, that resignation in suffering is less the gift of great intellectual powers, than of well-regulated religious and moral sentiments."

The work, thus concluded amidst the anguish of a painful disease, was published in 1802, with the title of *Natural Theology; or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, collected from the Appearances of Nature.* This disquisition alone (he reminds us*) was wanted to make up his works into a system, in which works the public have now before them, the Evidences of Natural Religion, the Evidences of Revealed Religion, and an Account, of the Duties that result from both. His Theology may be classed among the most interesting books of the English language. We are carried by the Author, with unceasing delights, through the most prominent wonders and striking contrivances of the whole creation. Where indolence before saw nothing to admire, it suddenly discovers the most ingenious designs and elaborate workmanship; where apathy beheld not cause for affecting sentiments, it sees the most powerful reason to kindle with gratitude, and be awed with reverence to the Deity. It is a small objection

* Dedication.

to urge, that in his discussions upon the human frame, Dr. Paley is not, according to the modern discoveries of science, always anatomically correct. Truth does not require that any of his conclusions should be retracted on account of this inaccuracy. His arguments against the atheistic schemes cannot be overthrown, even though some of his physiological descriptions may be disputed. If he had been a better anatomist, his reasonings in proof of a Deity would have been even more forcible than at present; because all the improvements in the knowledge of our own bodies, tend to unfold more and more the curious subtilty of their mechanism. For those who do not study the human structure professionally, Paley's delineation is sufficiently correct: others, who are required to be rigid anatomists, will obtain from his book something more interesting than technical knowledge; they will be delighted with acute reflections, and devout speculations, upon universal nature.

Dr. Paley's constitution was gradually yielding to the encroachments of sickness. After his return from Lincoln to Bishop-Wearmouth, in the spring of 1805, he was seized with a violent attack of his disorder, which all art and assiduity were unable to repel. None of his faculties were destroyed during his sickness, except, perhaps, his sight, which, it is believed, failed him a few days before his decease. His sufferings did not overcome his fortitude nor disturb his composure of mind, but during the whole scene of his last trials he maintained the greatest serenity and self-possession. He soothed the distress of his family, with those consolations of religion which supported himself, and on the evening of the 25th of May tranquilly expired. His remains were deposited near to those of his first wife, in the cathedral of Carlisle, with this humble inscription:

Here lieth interred, the remains of
WILLIAM PALEY, D. D.
Who died May 25, 1805. Aged 62.

For those who delight to be acquainted with the physiognomy as well as the mind of an Author, the portrait of Dr. Paley, by Romney (from which engravings have been published,) will convey a correct idea of his countenance. In person he exceeded the common stature, with a tendency in the latter part of his life to corpulence.

He is supposed to have left his family in affluent circumstances; for his income during many years had been ample, the profit of his writings must have been considerable, and though free from parsimony he had always practised, what he recommended to the young clergy of his diocess,* economy upon a plan. His eldest son, William Paley, rivalled his father in his successful career at college, being third wrangler, and first members' prize-man, both as middle and senior bachelor. He was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, was distinguished for his abilities, and died in March, 1817, in the thirty-seventh year of his age.

Dr. Paley's Sermons upon general topics were published after his death, under the following circumstances. In a codicil to his will he remarked: "If my life had been continued, it was my intention to have printed at Sunderland, a volume of sermons, about 500 copies, to be distributed gratis, in the parish; and I had proceeded so far in the design, as to have transcribed several sermons for that purpose, which are in a parcel by themselves. There is also a parcel from which I intended to make other transcripts; but the business is in an imperfect, unfinished state; the arrangement is not settled, farther than that I thought the sermon on Seriousness in Religion should come first, and then the doctrinal sermons; there are also many repetitions in them, and some that might be omitted, or consolidated with others." He proceeded to direct, that after the necessary revision of the manuscripts, the sermons should be printed at the expense of his executors, by the Rev. Mr. Stephenson, and distributed in the neighbourhood, first, to those who frequented church, then to farmers' families in the country, and lastly, to such as had a person in the family who could read, and were likely to read them; but he added preremptorily, that they should not be published for sale. His request was complied with, as far as was practicable. A collection of the sermons was printed at Sunderland, in 1806, and given to the inhabitants of Bishop-Wearmouth; but as it seemed impossible to prevent a surreptitious sale, his family afterward consented to their publication.

* Ordination Sermon.

Having related, as succinctly as possible, the principal occurrences in the life of Dr. Paley, it only remains for us to take a general view of his character. This is a gratifying task, for the history of few men presents so many topics for admiration, and so little ground for censure; such high intellectual talents, dignified with so much strict and unassuming virtue. His whole conduct, free from the bias of interest or caprice, was guided by the soundest principles of integrity, from which he deviated as little as the fallibility of our nature will allow. Such was the rectitude of his behaviour, that the Rev. Mr. Hall, one of his college friends, declared that he never knew him guilty of a vicious act, nor inattentive to propriety of moral conduct; and his first patron, Bishop Law, always gave him the eulogy of being a good man, and a good Christian. His independence was inflexible. He never relied upon any arts for his advancement in life, except the conscientious discharge of his duties, and the exercise of his talents for the common benefit. To the mode of seeking preferment by obsequiousness and servility (which he emphatically called *rooting,*) he always expressed the most hostile antipathy. He warned the young clergy of his diocess from the pulpit, that for once patronage is forfeited by modesty, it is ten times lost by importunity and intrusion. All his own promotions in the church were either marks of the esteem of private friendship, or testimonies of the advantage which had accrued to the cause of religion from his writings.

Although his virtue was unimpeachable, he was an enemy to all kinds of moroseness and austerity. In every relation in life, either as father, husband, or friend, he was not only exemplary for the correctness of his demeanour, but amiable for a generous warmth of feeling, and a liveliness of disposition. It was one of his apophthegms that "a man who is not sometimes a fool, is always one." This reminds one of Rochefoucault's maxim, "Gravity is a mysterious carriage of the body, invented to cover the defects of the mind." The grave man may choose the description of his character either from the English or the French philosopher. Paley accuses him of stupidity, Rochefoucault of knavery; and it is unquestionable, that from one source or the other proceeds that grave and puritanical solemnity, which passes with vulgar judges for superior wisdom and piety. Paley was never grave but upon grave occasions. In company, his vivacity exhilarated all around him. He was fond of cards, but would readily abandon the whist-table for the sake of intelligent conversation; his early predilection also for theatrical amusements, remained with him to mature age. By such recreations as these, he only relaxed his mind, and enlivened his spirits: his discrimination and self-control easily stopped him at the point where indulgence ceases to be innocent. Those who cannot boast of his judgment and self-discipline, who spend at the card-table countless hours which should be given to more serious employments, and who find at the theatre no stimulus to virtue, but only excitements to profligacy, should not dare appeal to the example of Dr. Paley to justify excesses, which he reprobated and abhorred.

The cheerfulness which our Author could so agreeably diffuse amongst others, he enjoyed perpetually in his own mind. He was invincibly contented; nothing could depress him into gloom and despondence. Nor did this disposition proceed from an unthinking insensibility to evil, but from the discipline with which he had subjected his desires, and that pious intuition with which he saw, in the benevolent contrivances of the Deity, unceasing cause for grateful recollection and joyous anticipations. Discontent and ambition are put to the blush, when we read that this highly gifted man was happy in the toil of a school, and the indigence of a living worth only 80*l.* a year. Subsequently, when his fame was established, and admiration was loud in her panegyrics of his merit, he was not elated into arrogance, nor seemed to think, as some of his friends did, that his rewards had been insufficient. He gratefully acknowledged to the Bishop of Durham,* that his munificence, in conjunction with some other excellent prelates, had placed him in ecclesiastical situations, *more* than adequate to every object of reasonable ambition.

In the performance of all his clerical duties, he was regular, assiduous, and devout. The labours of college tutor, and the studies of philosophy, had not given such a learned bias to his understanding, as to create any distaste for the humblest

* Dedication to Natural Theology.

duties of an ecclesiastic. He was loved by his parishioners for his obliging civilities, for the manner in which he adapted himself to their capacities, and sympathized with their feelings. He left them no inconsiderable token of his personal regard, and of his solicitude for their religious improvement, in the posthumous donation of his sermons. As these compositions were never designed for publication, it would be unfair to make any comparison between them and similar works of our own or foreign divines. In polished eloquence, in sublimity of description, in tenderness of sentiment, no one who considers the congregation to which they were delivered, can expect they should excel. Still the public would have had cause for regret, if they had been withheld; for they are cogent and convincing discourses, unveiling the human heart, exposing its subterfuges, and forcing men, if they are not utterly disingenuous, to reflect with seriousness upon religion. The effect of his sermons was partly aided, partly obstructed, by his delivery; for though he was not free from a provincial dialect, and his voice was harsh and unmodulated, yet he was able to impress his auditors by the energy and obvious sincerity of his manner. His sentiments upon religion were mild and tolerant, and his bosom not heated with animosity against any of the sects that divide our country. As to the charge of heterodoxy (which people often attach to others, without knowing their own or their neighbours' creed,) let those who can, substantiate it against Paley from his Works, for it is manifestly unjust now to infer it from any thing else.

Our Author, we have seen, was not always merely a passive spectator of the public occurrences of the day. The part which he took in the controversy respecting the Articles of the church, has been already noticed, and from his whole behaviour and writings we clearly perceive, that he felt subscription to be a galling load; which, when he could not throw it off, he endeavoured with all his casuistry to lighten to himself and others. We may advert with the purest satisfaction to his humane exertions for the suppression of the slave trade. In his Moral Philosophy* he condemned with warmth this nefarious traffic; he assisted with his arguments the committee instituted at London for the abolition, and had several conferences with Mr. Clarkson, "the great and active apostle of the cause." At a meeting also of the inhabitants of Carlisle, convened in 1792, to petition parliament upon the subject, he took the chair, and prefaced a series of resolutions that were carried, with a very feeling and argumentative speech.

In the political opinions advanced in his Moral Philosophy, he endeavoured to teach his countrymen to value rational liberty, and to practise rational submission. He has exploded Locke's idea of a social compact, and substituted the doctrine of public expediency. Defining civil liberty† as the not being restrained by any law, but what conduces in a greater degree to the public welfare, he reduces the justice of every particular case of resistance to a computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other.‡ Changes, he warns, are not to be adventured upon without a comprehensive discernment of the consequences; without a knowledge, as well of the remote tendency as of the immediate design. Applying his own principles, he disputed the advantage of adopting any reform in the house of commons; and by thus advancing upon contested ground, became obnoxious to the hostility of one party of the state. By the freedom of other remarks, he offended also the Tories, and the vehement supporters of existing authorities. Thus, by his opinions he sacrificed the favour of most political partisans, leaving himself to be recompensed by the consciousness of his sincerity, and the applause of the moderate part of the community. It is but just, for persons who inveigh with angry warmth against the different parts of his philosophy, from which they dissent, to consider how impossible it is for any writer to discuss such a diversity of subjects as that work embraces, without coming in collision with the prejudices of individuals, with the opposite theories of statesmen, and the irreconcilable tenets of sectaries. His arguments are always conducted with candour and moderation; and therefore, although we may finally reject them, they deserve to be weighed with impartiality and attention.

* Book iii. part ii. chap. iii. † Book vi. chap. v. ‡ Chap. iii.

It has been a frequent complaint among the friends and admirers of Dr. Paley, that he was not advanced to the highest ecclesiastical dignities, to some episcopal station. We have already hinted at the causes of this neglect; but as the Reviewer* is in possession of more secrets than we know, we must permit him to disclose them to the reader. "A cloud of suspicion long hung over him, and the prejudices of a great ecclesiastic in particular are supposed to have obstructed his advancement; but it appears to be unknown to the biographer (for we do not believe the fact to be injuriously concealed) that at a later period Dr. Paley was actually proposed for a high station in the church by that great minister" (Mr. Pitt,) "who in this work" (Meadley's Life of Paley) "has been treated with so much injustice; and that the disappointment proceeded from a higher quarter than before. Homely truths about rulers, uttered in blunt and uncourtly language, are not always, we believe, the first recommendations to high preferment: the peculiarities also of a man of genius render him less *producible*, and the jealousy entertained of overbearing talents, when they have taken a political direction, leaves the way more open to those against whom nothing can be objected, than those for whom much may be urged."

In our last province, to estimate the literary and intellectual character of Dr. Paley, we have the concurrent testimony of all parties, that he was not encumbered with erudition, but was far from being what is termed a learned man. In classical studies he never delighted, and never made any considerable advances: for that array of learning which glitters through his Evidences, was all prepared for him by Lardner and other scholars. Instead of perusing a multiplicity of books, he relied upon the fecundity of his own mind, and the acuteness of his observation, aided by some choice assistances, of which he never scrupled to make the most liberal use. What he remarked of Mr. Fox, is applicable to himself, to Dr. Johnson, and numbers of intelligent men, who think much more deeply than they read. "Why, sir, some men are never idle, and Mr. Fox is one of these; whether engaged in business, in study, or in dissipation, his mind was actively employed. Such men lose no time, they are always adding to their stock of information; whilst numbers, with grave appearance, trifle life away, and pursue nothing with advantage or effect." Paley's chief merits as an author are, his close investigation of truth, and his clear development of it to others. He detects it with the most acute penetration, amidst numberless perplexing errors: he disentangles it of every besetting difficulty, arranges it in the clearest method, expands it through all its proper ramifications, and illustrates it so forcibly, that it becomes as intelligible to the reader as to himself. His writings resemble a beautiful and productive orchard: we are never compelled to regale upon leaves, where we came to search for fruit. In matter he is almost as pregnant as Aristotle, but he never repels us with the dry and uninteresting style of the Stagyrite. On the contrary, his manner is always captivating, his language easy, familiar, and sometimes eloquent. He often for the sake of force uses a quaint phraseology, and, like Socrates, employs homely illustrations and comparisons, which, though they detract from elegance, throw light where light is most wanted.

It is often urged in disparagement of Paley's genius, that his most important works are far from being completely original. This charge is not to be denied, nor yet does it carry so much weight as envy would be inclined to attribute to it. In his Moral Philosophy, he derived very essential aid from the speculations of Abraham Tucker,† a gentleman who published, under the assumed name of Edward Search, a work in nine volumes, called The Light of Nature. In the Evi-

* No. 18, p. 399.

† Let not this ingenious writer be disparaged, though he has never had the fortune to be popular. The Quarterly Review (No. 18, p. 397.) remarks, "There are some writers of great but disorderly understanding, unable to arrange, to *amplify*, or to *illustrate* their own conceptions. Such was Abraham Tucker." Paley observes (Pref. to M. Phil.) "I have found in this writer, more original thinking and observation upon the several subjects that he has taken in hand, than in any other, not to say, than in all others put together. His talent also for *illustration* is *unrivalled*. But his thoughts are *diffused through a long*, various, and irregular work." There can be no doubt that Paley knew Tucker's character better than the reviewer.

dences of Christianity, he freely availed himself of Dr. Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History, and Bishop Douglas's Criterion of Miracles; and the labours of Ray, Derham, and others, furnished him with many materials for his Natural Theology. When we have extracted from his Works all that is the property of others, there will remain original matter enough upon which to build a just fame of authorship: and even what he has borrowed in his Philosophy and Theology, often comes from him and from its first authors as different in appearance, as gold from the hands of a skilful artist, and gold in the rugged ore. His exhibition of truth is more valuable than others' discovery of it; as in manufactures, the workmanship often costs more than the article in its natural state.

It is a just rule in criticism, always to weigh an author's end, and if that be a good one, to applaud or condemn him according to his accomplishment of it, or his failure. If it was Paley's object to give a view of our moral duties, and of the proofs of natural and revealed religion, nobody can justly find fault with his design. How far he has succeeded in the execution, we may judge by asking what prudent man, however great his abilities, would venture to run over the same ground of discussion that Paley has occupied? If our Author consulted preceding writers, it was not for the purpose of fraudulently enriching himself at their expense, but with a view to give his own work that perfection which theirs had not attained. If former productions of the kind had possessed due excellence, his would have been superfluous: for him to follow others over difficult topics without aiding himself by their labours, would have been a proud conceit, that must have precipitated him into error, and repaid his efforts with public neglect. We may estimate the value of his works by considering what would be our loss, if they were obliterated from the English language. How many, upon questions of casuistry that daily arise, would have had recourse to the "Light of Nature," the rays of which are dissipated over the surface of nine volumes! Would shallow sceptics have been patient enough to travel through Lardner's voluminous works, in order to satisfy their doubts, when the love of truth is not so deep, in most, as to carry them carefully to the end of Paley's compendious work? Would general readers have been content to pursue a detail of technical anatomy and physical phenomena, if the topics had not been illustrated and enlivened by our Author's masterly pen? In what we have said, we intend no injurious censure upon writers, from whom Paley has drawn much assistance. Persons of strong intellect, and patient industry, may find delight in Tucker. Lardner's work is a noble monument to the truth of our religion; and Ray and Derham in their days were ingenious writers, and are still sometimes useful to professional men. But the patience of ordinary readers is soon exhausted by delay, and they cannot submit to lose time in tedious research. They demand imperatively that truth be submitted to them in the clearest light, and most compendious bulk. This, Paley has done systematically, in a beautiful series of investigation. As he has left us in private life an example that may animate the diligence and piety of every one in his profession; so he has bequeathed writings, in which all the intelligent part of his countrymen, without distinction of ranks and occupations, may see clearly unfolded the maxims of moral order, the sublime wonders of nature, the irrefragable truth and heavenly precepts of Revelation.

R. L

EVIDENCES

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

IN THREE PARTS.

BY

WILLIAM PALEY, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF CARLISLE.

LONDON:

HENRY FISHER, SON, AND P. JACKSON,

38, NEWGATE STREET.

1828.

TO THE

HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

JAMES YORK, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF ELY.

My Lord,

When, five years ago, an important station in the University of Cambridge awaited your Lordship's disposal, you were pleased to offer it to me. The circumstances under which this offer was made, demand a public acknowledgment. I had never seen your Lordship; I possessed no connexion which could possibly recommend me to your favor; I was known to you, only by my endeavours, in common with many others, to discharge my duty as a tutor in the University; and by some very imperfect, but certainly well-intended, and, as you thought, useful publications since. In an age by no means wanting in examples of honourable patronage, although this deserve not to be mentioned in respect of the object of your Lordship's choice, it is inferior to none in the purity and disinterestedness of the motives which suggested it.

How the following work may be received, I pretend not to foretell. My first prayer concerning it is, that it may do good to many: my second hope, that it may assist,

what it hath always been my earnest wish to promote, the religious part of an academical education. If in this latter view it might seem, in any degree, to excuse your Lordship's judgment of its author, I shall be gratified by the reflection, that, to a kindness flowing from public principles, I have made the best public return in my power.

In the mean time, and in every event, I rejoice in the opportunity here afforded me, of testifying the sense I entertain of your Lordship's conduct, and of a notice which I regard as the most flattering distinction of my life.

I am,

My Lord,

With sentiments of gratitude and respect,

Your Lordship's faithful,

And most obliged servant,

W. Paley.

EVIDENCES

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

PREPARATORY CONSIDERATIONS.

I DEEM it unnecessary to prove, that mankind stood in need of a revelation, because I have met with no serious person who thinks that, even under the Christian revelation, we have too much light, or any degree of assurance, which is superfluous. I desire, moreover, that in judging of Christianity, it may be remembered, that the question lies between this religion and none: for if the Christian religion be not credible, no one, with whom we have to do, will support the pretensions of any other.

Suppose, then, the world we live in to have had a Creator; suppose it to appear, from the predominant aim and tendency of the provisions and contrivances observable in the universe, that the Deity, when he formed it, consulted for the happiness of the sensitive creation; suppose the disposition which dictated this counsel to continue; suppose a part of the creation to have received faculties from their Maker, by which they are capable of rendering a moral obedience to his will, and of voluntarily pursuing any end for which he has designed them; suppose the Creator to intend for these, his rational and unaccountable agents, a second state of existence, in which their situation will be regulated by their behaviour in the first state, by which supposition (and by no other) the objection to the divine government in not putting a difference between the good and the bad, and the inconsistency of this confusion with the care and benevolence discoverable in the works of the Deity is done away; suppose it to be of the utmost importance to the subjects of this dispensation to know what is intended for them; that is, suppose the knowledge of it to be highly conducive to the happiness of the species, a purpose which so many provisions of nature are calculated to promote: suppose, nevertheless, almost the whole race, either by the imperfection of their faculties, the misfortune of their situation, or by the loss of some prior revelation, to want this knowledge, and not to be likely without the aid of a new revelation, to attain it:—under these circumstances, is it improbable that a revelation should be made? is it incredible that God should interpose for such a purpose? Suppose him to design for mankind a future state; is it unlikely that he should acquaint him with it?

Now in what way can a revelation be made but by miracles? In none which we are able to conceive. Consequently in whatever degree it is probable, or not very improbable, that a revelation should

be communicated to mankind at all: in the same degree is it probable, or not very improbable, that miracles should be wrought. Therefore when miracles are related to have been wrought in the promulgating of a revelation manifestly wanted, and, if true, of inestimable value, the improbability which arises from the miraculous nature of the things related, is not greater than the original improbability that such a revelation should be imparted by God.

I wish it however to be correctly understood, in what manner, and o what extent, this argument is alleged. We do not assume the attributes of the Deity, or the existence of a future state, in order to *prove* the reality of miracles. That reality always must be proved by evidence. We assert only that in miracles adduced in support of revelation, there is not any such antecedent improbability as no testimony can surmount. And for the purpose of maintaining this assertion, we contend that the incredibility of miracles related to have been wrought in attestation of a message from God, conveying intelligence of a future state of rewards and punishments, and teaching mankind how to prepare themselves for that state, is not in itself greater than the event, call it either probable or improbable, of the two following propositions being true: namely, first, that a future state of existence should be destined by God for his human creation; and, secondly, that being so destined, he should acquaint them with it. It is not necessary for our purpose, that these propositions be capable of proof, or even that by arguments drawn from the light of nature, they can be made out to be probable; it is enough that we are able to say concerning them, that they are not so violently improbable, so contradictory to what we already believe of the divine power and character, that either the propositions themselves, or facts strictly connected with the propositions (and therefore no further improbable than they are improbable), ought to be rejected at first sight, and to be rejected by whatever strength or complication of evidence they be attested.

This is the prejudication we would resist. For to this length does a modern objection to miracles go, viz. that no human testimony can in any case render them credible. I think the reflection above stated, that if there be a revelation, there must be miracles, and that under the circumstances in which the human species are placed, a revelation is not improbable, i. e. improbable in any great degree, to be a fair answer to the whole objection.

But since it is an objection which stands in the very threshold of our argument, and, if admitted, is a bar to every proof, and to all future reasoning upon the subject, it may be necessary, before we proceed further, to examine the principle upon which it professes to be founded; which principle is concisely this, That it is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false.

Now there appears a small ambiguity in the term "experience," and in the phrases "contrary to experience," or "contradicting experience," which it may be necessary to remove in the first place. Strictly speaking, the narrative of a fact is *then* only contrary to experience, when the fact is related to have existed at a time and place, at which time and place we being present did not perceive it to exist; as if it should be asserted that, in a particular

room, at a particular hour of a certain day, a man was raised from the dead, in which room, and at the time specified, we being present, and looking on, perceived no such event to have taken place. Here the assertion is contrary to experience, properly so called: and is a contrariety which no evidence can surmount. It matters nothing whether the fact be of a miraculous nature or not. But although this be the experience and the contrariety, which archbishop Tillotson alleged in the quotation with which Mr. Hume opens his essay, it is certainly not that experience, nor that contrariety, which Mr. Hume himself intended to object. And, short of this, I know no intelligible signification which can be affixed to the term "contrary to experience," but one, viz. that of not having ourselves experienced any thing similar to the thing related, or such things not being generally experienced by others. I say, "not generally:" for to state concerning the fact in question, that no such thing was *ever* experienced, or that *universal* experience is against it, is to assume the subject of the controversy.

Now the improbability which arises from the want (for this properly is a want, not a contradiction) of experience, is only equal to the probability there is that, if the thing were true, we should experience things similar to it, or that such things would be generally experienced.—Suppose it then true that miracles were wrought on the first promulgation of Christianity, when nothing but miracles could decide its authority, is it certain that such miracles would be repeated so often, and in so many places, as to become objects of general experience? Is it a probability approaching to certainty? is it a probability of any strength or force? is it such as no evidence can encounter? And yet this probability is the exact *converse*, and therefore the exact measure, of the improbability which arises from the want of experience, and which Mr. Hume represents as invincible by human testimony.

It is not like alleging a new law of nature, or a new experiment in natural philosophy; because when these are related, it is expected that under the same circumstances, the same effect will follow universally; and in proportion as this expectation is justly entertained, the want of a corresponding experience negatives the history. But to expect concerning a miracle, that it should succeed upon a repetition, is to expect what would make it cease to be a miracle, which is contrary to its nature as such, and would totally destroy the use and purpose for which it was wrought.

The force of experience as an objection to miracles, is founded in the presumption, either that the course of nature is invariable, or that if it be ever varied, variations will be frequent and general. Has the necessity of this alternative been demonstrated? Permit us to call the course of nature the agency of an intelligent Being; and is there any good reason for judging this state of the case to be probable? Ought we not rather to expect that such a Being, on occasions of peculiar importance, may interrupt the order which he had appointed, yet that such occasions should return seldom; that these interruptions consequently should be confined to the experience of a few; that the want of it, therefore, in many, should be matter neither of surprise nor objection?

But as a continuation of the argument from experience, it is said that when we advance accounts of miracles, we assign effects without

causes, or we attribute effects to causes inadequate to the purpose, or to causes of the operation of which we have no experience. Of what causes we may ask, and of what effects does the objection speak? If it be answered, that when we ascribe the cure of the palsy to a touch, of blindness to the anointing of the eyes with clay, or the raising of the dead to a word, we lay ourselves open to this imputation; we reply that we ascribe no such effects to such causes. We perceive no virtue or energy in these things more than in other things of the same kind. They are merely signs to connect the miracle with its end. The effect we ascribe simply to the volition of the Deity; of whose existence and power, not to say of whose presence and agency, we have previous and independent proof. We have therefore all we seek for in the works of rational agents,—a sufficient power and an adequate motive. In a word, once believe that there is a God, and miracles are not incredible.

Mr. Hume states the case of miracles to be a contest of opposite improbabilities; that is to say, a question whether it be more improbable that the miracle should be true, or the testimony false: and this I think a fair account of the controversy. But herein I remark a want of argumentative justice, that, in describing the improbability of miracles, he suppresses all those circumstances of extenuation, which result from our knowledge of the existence, power, and disposition of the Deity; his concern in the creation, the end answered by the miracle, the importance of that end, and its subserviency to the plan pursued in the work of nature. As Mr. Hume has represented the question, miracles are alike incredible to him who is previously assured of the constant agency of a Divine Being, and to him who believes that no such Being exists in the universe. They are equally incredible, whether related to have been wrought upon occasions the most deserving, and for purposes the most beneficial, or for no assignable end whatever, or for an end confessedly trifling or pernicious. This surely cannot be a correct statement. In adjusting also the other side of the balance, the strength and weight of testimony, this author has provided an answer to every possible accumulation of historical proof by telling us, that we are not obliged to explain how the story of the evidence arose. Now I think that we *are* obliged; not, perhaps, to shew by positive accounts how it did, but by a probable hypothesis how it might so happen. The existence of the testimony is a phenomenon; the truth of the fact solves the phenomenon. If we reject this solution, we ought to have some other to rest in; and none, even by our adversaries, can be admitted, which is not inconsistent with the principles that regulate human affairs and human conduct at present, or which makes men *then* to have been a different kind of beings from what they are now.

But the short consideration which, independently of every other, convinces me that there is no solid foundation in Mr. Hume's conclusion is the following. When a theorem is proposed to a mathematician, the first thing he does with it is to try it upon a simple case, and if it produce a false result, he is sure that there must be some mistake in the demonstration. Now to proceed in this way with what may be called Mr. Hume's theorem. If twelve men, whose probity and good sense I had long known, should seriously and circumstan-

tially relate to me an account of a miracle wrought before their eyes, and in which it was impossible that they should be deceived; if the governor of the country, hearing a rumour of this account, should call these men into his presence, and offer them a short proposal, either to confess the imposture, or submit to be tied up to a gibbet; if they should refuse with one voice to acknowledge that there existed any falsehood or imposture in the case; if this threat were communicated to them separately, yet with no different effect; if it was at last executed; if I myself saw them, one after another, consenting to be racked, burnt, or strangled, rather than give up the truth of their account; —still, if Mr. Hume's rule be my guide, I am not to believe them. Now I undertake to say, that there exists not a sceptic in the world who would not believe them, or who would defend such incredulity.

Instances of spurious miracles, supported by strong apparent testimony, undoubtedly demand examination; Mr. Hume has endeavoured to fortify his argument by some examples of this kind. I hope in a proper place to shew, that none of them reach the strength or circumstances of the Christian evidence. In these, however, consists the weight of his objection; in the principle itself, I am persuaded, there is none.

PART I.

OF THE DIRECT HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND WHEREIN IT IS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EVIDENCE ALLEGED FOR OTHER MIRACLES.

THE two propositions which I shall endeavour to establish are these:—

I. That there is satisfactory evidence that many professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to a new rule of conduct.

II. That there is *not* any satisfactory evidence, that persons professing to be original witnesses of other miracles, in their nature as certain as these are, have ever acted in the same manner, in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and properly in consequence of their belief of those accounts.

The first of these propositions, as it forms the argument, will stand at the head of the following *nine* chapters.

CHAPTER I.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

TO support this proposition, two points are necessary to be made out: first that the Founder of the institution, his associates and immediate followers, acted the part which the proposition imputes to them: secondly, that they did so in attestation of the miraculous history recorded in our Scriptures, and solely in consequence of their belief of the truth of this history.

Before we produce any particular testimony to the activity and sufferings which compose the subject of our first assertion, it will be proper to consider the degree of probability which the assertion derives from the *nature of the case*, that is, by inferences from those parts of the case which, in point of fact, are on all hands acknowledged.

First, then, the Christian religion exists, and therefore by some means or other was established. Now it either owes the principle of its establishment, *i. e.* its first publication, to the activity of the Person who was the founder of the institution, and of those who were joined

with him in the undertaking, or we are driven upon the strange supposition, that, although they might lie by, others would take it up; although they were quiet and silent, other persons busied themselves in the success and propagation of their story. This is perfectly incredible. To me it appears little less than certain, that, if the first announcing of religion by the Founder had not been followed up by the zeal and industry of his immediate disciples, the attempt must have expired in its birth. Then as to the kind and degree of exertion which was employed, and the mode of life to which these persons submitted, we reasonably suppose it to be like that which we observe in all others who voluntarily become missionaries of a new faith. Frequent, earnest, and laborious preaching, constantly conversing with religious persons upon religion, a sequestration from the common pleasures, engagements, and varieties of life, and an addiction to one serious object, compose the habits of such men. I do not say that this mode of life is without enjoyment, but I say that the enjoyment springs from sincerity. With a consciousness at the bottom of hollowness and falsehood, the fatigue and restraint would become insupportable. I am apt to believe that very few hypocrites engage in these undertakings; or, however, persist in them long. Ordinarily speaking, nothing can overcome the indolence of mankind, the love which is natural to most tempers of cheerful society and cheerful scenes, or the desire, which is common to all, of personal ease and freedom, but conviction.

Secondly, it is also highly probable, from the nature of the case, that the propagation of the new religion was attended with difficulty and danger. As addressed to the Jews, it was a system adverse not only to their habitual opinions, but to those opinions upon which their hopes, their partialities, their pride, their consolation, was founded. This people, with or without reason, had worked themselves into a persuasion, that some signal and greatly advantageous change was to be effected in the condition of their country, by the agency of a long-promised messenger from heaven.* The rulers of the Jews, their leading sect, their priesthood, had been the authors of this persuasion to the common people; so that it was not merely the conjecture of theoretical divines, or the secret expectation of a few recluse devotees, but it was become the popular hope and passion, and like all popular opinions, undoubting, and impatient of contradiction. They clung to this hope under every misfortune of their country, and with more tenacity as their dangers or calamities increased. To find, therefore, that expectations so gratifying were to be worse than disappointed; that they were to end in the diffusion of a mild unambitious religion, which, instead of victories and triumphs, instead of exalting their nation and institution above the rest of the world, was to advance those whom they despised to an equality with themselves, in those very points of comparison in which they most valued their own distinction, could be no very pleasing discovery to a Jewish mind; nor could the messengers of such intelligence expect to be well received or

* "Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judææ profecti rerum potirentur."—Sueton. Vespasian. cap. 4—8.
"Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, profectique Judææ rerum potirentur." Tacit. Hist. lib. v. cap. 9—13.

easily credited. The doctrine was equally harsh and novel. The extending of the kingdom of God to those who did not conform to the law of Moses, was a notion that had never before entered into the thoughts of a Jew.

The character of the new institution was, in other respects also, ungrateful to Jewish habits and principles. Their own religion was in a high degree technical. Even the enlightened Jew placed a great deal of stress upon the ceremonies of his law, saw in them a great deal of virtue and efficacy; the gross and vulgar had scarcely any thing else; and the hypocritical and ostentatious magnified them above measure, as being the instruments of their own reputation and influence. The Christian scheme, without formally repealing the Levitical code, lowered its estimation extremely. In the place of strictness and zeal in performing the observances which that code prescribed, or which tradition had added to it, the new sect preached up faith, well-regulated affections, inward purity, and moral rectitude of disposition, as the true ground, on the part of the worshipper, of merit and acceptance with God. This however rational it may appear, or recommending to us at present, did not by any means facilitate the plan then. On the contrary, to disparage those qualities which the highest characters in the country valued themselves most upon, was a sure way of making powerful enemies. As if the frustration of the national hope was not enough, the long-esteemed merit of ritual zeal and punctuality was to be decried, and that by Jews preaching to Jews.

The ruling party at Jerusalem had just before crucified the Founder of the religion. That is a fact which will not be disputed. They, therefore, who stood forth to preach the religion must necessarily reproach these rulers with an execution, which they could not but represent as an unjust and cruel murder. This would not render their office more easy, or their situation more safe.

With regard to the interference of the Roman government which was then established in Judea, I should not expect, that, despising as it did the religion of the country, it would, if left to itself, animadvert, either with much vigilance or much severity, upon the schisms and controversies which arose within it. Yet there was that in Christianity which might easily afford a handle of accusation with a jealous government. The Christians avowed an unqualified obedience to a new master. They avowed also that he was the person who had been foretold to the Jews under the suspected title of King. The spiritual nature of this kingdom, the consistency of this obedience with civil subjection, were distinctions too refined to be entertained by a Roman president, who viewed the business at a great distance, or through the medium of very hostile representations. Our histories accordingly inform us, that this was the turn which the enemies of Jesus gave to his character and pretensions in their remonstrances with Pontius Pilate. And Justin Martyr, about a hundred years afterward, complains that the same mistake prevailed in his time: "Ye having heard that we are waiting for a kingdom, suppose, without distinguishing, that we mean a human kingdom, when in truth we speak of that which is with God."* And it was undoubtedly a natural source of calumny and misconstruction.

* Ap. Ima. p. 16. Ed. Thirl.

The preachers of Christianity had therefore to contend with prejudice backed by power. They had to come forward to a disappointed people, to a priesthood possessing a considerable share of municipal authority, and actuated by strong motives of opposition and resentment; and they had to do this under a foreign government, to whose favour they made no pretensions, and which was constantly surrounded by their enemies. The well known, because the experienced fate of reformers, whenever the reformation subverts some reigning opinion, and does not proceed upon a change that has already taken place in the sentiments of a country, will not allow, much less lead us to suppose, that the first propagators of Christianity at Jerusalem, and in Judea, under the difficulties and the enemies they had to contend with, and entirely destitute as they were of force, authority, or protection, could execute their mission with personal ease and safety.

Let us next inquire what might reasonably be expected by the preachers of Christianity, when they turned themselves to the heathen public. Now the first thing that strikes us is, that the religion they carried with them was *exclusive*. It denied without reserve the truth of every article of heathen mythology, the existence of every object of their worship. It accepted no compromise; it admitted no comparison. It must prevail, if it prevailed at all, by the overthrow of every statue, altar, and temple in the world. It will not be easily credited, that a design, so bold as this was, could in any age be attempted to be carried into execution with impunity.

For it ought to be considered, that this was not setting forth or magnifying the character and worship of some new competitor for a place in the pantheon, whose pretensions might be discussed or asserted without questioning the reality of any others; it was pronouncing all other gods to be false, and all other worship vain. From the facility with which the polytheism of ancient nations admitted new objects of worship into the number of their acknowledged divinities, or the patience with which they might entertain proposals of this kind, we can argue nothing as to their toleration of a system, or of the publishers and active propagators of a system, which swept away the very foundation of the existing establishment. The one was nothing more than what it would be, in popish countries, to add a saint to the calendar; the other was to abolish and tread under foot the calendar itself.

Secondly, it ought also to be considered, that this was not the case of philosophers propounding in their books, or in their schools, doubts concerning the truth of the popular creed, or even avowing their disbelief of it. These philosophers did not go about from place to place to collect proselytes from amongst the common people; to form, in the heart of the country, societies professing their tenets; to provide for the order, instruction, and permanency of these societies; nor did they enjoin their followers to withdraw themselves from the public worship of the temples, or refuse a compliance with rites instituted by the laws.* These things are what the Christians did,

* The best of the ancient philosophers, Plato, Cicero, and Epictetus, allowed, or rather enjoined, men to worship the gods of the country, and in the established form. See passages to this purpose, collected from their works by Dr. Clarke, Nat. and Rev. Rel. p. 180. ed. 5. Except Socrates, they all thought it wiser to comply with the laws, than to contend.

and what the philosophers did not; and in these consisted the activity and danger of the enterprise.

Thirdly, it ought also to be considered, that this danger proceeded not merely from solemn acts and public resolutions of the state, but from sudden bursts of violence at particular places, from the license of the populace, the rashness of some magistrates and negligence of others; from the influence and instigation of interested adversaries, and, in general, from the variety and warmth of opinion which an errand so novel and extraordinary could not fail of exciting. I can conceive that the teachers of Christianity might both fear and suffer much from these causes, without any general persecution being denounced against them by imperial authority. Some length of time, I should suppose, might pass, before the vast machine of the Roman empire would be put into motion, or its attention be obtained to religious controversy: but during that time a great deal of ill usage might be endured by a set of friendless unprotected travellers, telling men, wherever they came, that the religion of their ancestors, the religion in which they had been brought up, the religion of the state and of the magistrate, the rites which they frequented, the pomp which they admired, was throughout a system of folly and delusion.

Nor do I think the teachers of Christianity would find protection in the general disbelief of the popular theology, which is supposed to have prevailed among the intelligent part of the heathen republic. It is by no means true that unbelievers are usually tolerant. They are not disposed (and why should they?) to endanger the present state of things, by suffering a religion of which they believe nothing, to be disturbed by another of which they believe as little. They are ready themselves to conform to any thing; and are, oftentimes, amongst the foremost to procure conformity from others, by any method which they think likely to be efficacious. when was ever a change of religion patronized by infidels? How little, notwithstanding the reigning scepticism, and the magnified liberality of that age, the true principles of toleration were understood by the wisest men amongst them, may be gathered from two eminent and uncontested examples. The younger Pliny, polished as he was by all the literature of that soft and elegant period, could gravely pronounce this monstrous judgment:—"Those who persisted in declaring themselves Christians, I ordered to be led away to punishment (*i. e.* to execution), for I DID NOT DOUBT, *whatever it was that they confessed, that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished.*" His master, Trajan, a mild and accomplished prince, went nevertheless, no further in his sentiments of moderation and equity, than what appears in the following rescript: "The Christians are not to be sought for; but if any be brought before you, and convicted, they are to be punished." And this direction he gives, after it had been reported to him by his own President, that, by the most strict examination nothing could be discovered in the principles of these persons, but "a bad and excessive superstition," accompanied, it seems, with an oath or mutual federation, "to allow themselves in no crime or immoral conduct whatever." The truth is, the ancient heathens considered religion entirely as an affair of state as much under the tuition of the magistrate, as any other part of the police. The religion of that age was not merely allied to the state

it was incorporated into it. Many of its offices were administered by the magistrate. Its titles of pontiffs, augurs, and flamens, were borne by senators, consuls, and generals. Without discussing therefore the truth of theology, they resented every affront put upon the established worship, as a direct opposition to the authority of government.

Add to which, that the religious systems of those times, however ill supported by evidence, had been long established. The *ancient* religion of a country has always many votaries, and sometimes not the fewer, because its origin is hidden in remoteness and obscurity. Men have a natural veneration for antiquity, especially in matters of religion. What Tacitus says of the Jewish, was more applicable to the heathen establishment; "Hi ritus, quoquo modo inducti, antiquitate defenduntur." It was also a splendid and sumptuous worship. It had its priesthood, its endowments, its temples. Statuary, painting, architecture, and music, contributed their effect to its ornament and magnificence. It abounded in festival shows and solemnities, to which the common people are greatly addicted, and which were of a nature to engage them much more than any thing of that sort among us. These things would retain great numbers on its side by the fascination of spectacle and pomp, as well as interest many in its preservation by the advantages which they drew from it. "It was moreover interwoven," as Mr. Gibbon rightly represents it, "with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or private life, with all the offices and amusements of society." On the due celebration also of its rites, the people were taught to believe, and did believe, that the prosperity of the country in a great measure depended.

I am willing to accept the account of the matter which is given by Mr. Gibbon: "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful:" and I would ask from which of these three classes of men were the Christian missionaries to look for protection or impunity? Could they expect it from the people, "whose acknowledged confidence in the public religion" they subverted from its foundation? From the philosopher, who, "considering all religions equally false," would of course rank theirs among the number, with the addition of regarding them as busy and troublesome zealots? Or from the magistrate, who, satisfied with the "utility" of the subsisting religion, would not be likely to countenance a spirit of proselytism and innovation;—a system which declared war against every other, and which, if it prevailed, must end in a total rupture of public opinion; an upstart religion, in a word, which was not content with its own authority, but must disgrace all the settled religions of the world? It was not to be imagined that he would endure with patience, that the religion of the emperor and of the state should be calumniated and borne down by a company of superstitious and despicable Jews.

Lastly, the *nature of the case* affords a strong proof, that the original teachers of Christianity, in consequence of their new profession, entered upon a new and singular course of life. We may be allowed to presume, that the institution which they preached to others, they conformed to in their own persons; because this is no more than what every teacher of a new religion both does, and must do, in order

to obtain either proselytes or hearers. The change which this would produce was very considerable. It is a change which we do not easily estimate, because, ourselves and all about us being habituated to the institution from our infancy, it is what we neither experience nor observe. After men became Christians, much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in an affectionate intercourse with other societies. Perhaps their mode of life, in its form and habit, was not very unlike the Unitas Fratrum, or the modern Methodists. Think then what it was to become *such* at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Antioch, or even at Jerusalem. How new! how alien from all their former habits and ideas, and from those of every body about them! What a revolution there must have been of opinions and prejudices to bring the matter to this!

We know what the precepts of the religion are; how pure, how benevolent, how disinterested a conduct they enjoin; and that this purity and benevolence are extended to the very thoughts and affections. We are not, perhaps, at liberty to take for granted that the lives of the preachers of Christianity were as perfect as their lessons: but we are entitled to contend, that the observable part of their behaviour must have agreed in a great measure with the duties which they taught. There was therefore (which is all that we assert), a course of life pursued by them, different from that which they before led. And this is of great importance. Men are brought to any thing almost sooner than to change their habit of life, especially when the change is either inconvenient, or made against the force of natural inclination, or with the loss of accustomed indulgences. "It is the most difficult of all things to convert men from vicious habits to virtuous ones, as every one may judge from what he feels in himself, as well as from what he sees in others."* It is almost like making men over again.

Left then to myself, and without any more information than a knowledge of the existence of the religion, of the general story upon which it is founded, and that no act of power, force, and authority, was concerned in its first success, I should conclude, from the very nature and exigency of the case, that the author of the religion during his life, and his immediate disciples after his death, *exerted* themselves in spreading and publishing the institution throughout the country in which it began, and into which it was first carried; that, in the prosecution of this purpose, they underwent the labours and troubles which we observe the propagators of new sects to undergo; that the attempt must necessarily have also been in a high degree dangerous; that, from the subject of the mission, compared with the fixed opinions and prejudices of those to whom the missionaries were to address themselves, they could hardly fail of encountering strong and frequent opposition; that, by the hand of government, as well as from the sudden fury and unbridled license of the people, they would oftentimes experience injurious and cruel treatment; that, at any rate, they must have always had so much to fear for their personal safety, as to have passed their lives in a state of constant peril and anxiety; and, lastly

* Hartley's Essays on Man, p. 190.

that their mode of life and conduct, visibly at least, corresponded with the institution which they delivered, and, so far, was both new and required continual self-denial.

CHAPTER II.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

AFTER thus considering what was *likely* to happen, we are next to inquire how the transaction is represented in the several accounts that have come down to us. And this inquiry is properly preceded by the other, for as much as the reception of these accounts may depend in part on the credibility of what they contain.

The obscure and distant view of Christianity, which some of the heathen writers of that age had gained, and which a few passages in their remaining works incidentally discover to us, offers itself to our notice in the first place: because, so far as this evidence goes, it is the concession of adversaries; the source from which it is drawn is unsuspected. Under this head, a quotation from Tacitus, well known to every scholar, must be inserted, as deserving particular attention. The reader will bear in mind that this passage was written about seventy years after Christ's death, and that it relates to transactions which took place about thirty years after that event. Speaking of the fire which happened at Rome in the time of Nero, and of the suspicions which were entertained that the emperor himself was concerned in causing it, the historian proceeds in his narrative and observations thus:—

"But neither these exertions, nor his largesses to the people, nor his offerings to the gods, did away the infamous imputation under which Nero lay, of having ordered the city to be set on fire. To put an end, therefore, to this report, he laid the guilt, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, upon a set of people who were holden in abhorrence for their crimes, and called by the vulgar, *Christians*. The founder of that name was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his procurator Pontius Pilate.—This pernicious superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again; and spread not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, where every thing bad upon the earth finds its way, and is practised. Some who confessed their sect were seized, and afterwards, by their information, a vast multitude were apprehended, who were convicted, not so much of the crime of burning Rome, as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery; for, some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs; some were crucified; and others were

wrapped in pitch shirts,* and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night. Nero lent his own gardens for these executions, and exhibited at the same time a mock Circensian entertainment; being a spectator of the whole, in the dress of a charioteer, sometimes mingling with the crowd on foot, and sometimes viewing the spectacle from his car. This conduct made the sufferers pitied; and though they were criminals, and deserving the severest punishments, yet they were considered as sacrificed, not so much out of a regard to the public good, as to gratify the cruelty of one man."

Our concern with this passage at present is only so far as it affords a presumption in support of the proposition which we maintain, concerning the activity and sufferings of the first teachers of Christianity. Now considered in this view, it proves three things: 1st, that the Founder of the institution was put to death; 2dly, that in the same country in which he was put to death, the religion, after a short check, broke out again and spread; that it so spread, as that, within thirty-four years from the author's death, a very great number of Christians *(ingens eorum multitudo)* were found at Rome. From which fact, the two following inferences may be fairly drawn: first, that if, in the space of thirty-four years from its commencement, the religion had spread throughout Judea, had extended itself to Rome, and there had numbered a great multitude of converts, the original teachers and missionaries of the institution could not have been *idle;* secondly, that when the Author of the undertaking was put to death as a malefactor for his attempt, the endeavours of his followers to establish his religion in the same country, among the same people, and in the same age, could not but be attended with danger.

Suetonius, a writer contemporary with Tacitus, describing the transactions of the same reign, uses these words: "Affecti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novæ et maleficæ."† "The Christians, a set of men of a new and mischievous (or magical) superstition, were punished."

Since it is not mentioned *here* that the burning of the city was the pretence of the punishment of the Christians, or that they were the Christians of Rome who alone suffered, it is probable that Suetonius refers to some more general persecution than the short and occasional one which Tacitus describes.

Juvenal, a writer of the same age with the two former, and intending, it should seem, to commemorate the cruelties exercised under Nero's government, has the following lines: ‡

> "Prone Tigellinum, tædâ lucebis in illâ,
> Quâ stantes ardent, qui fixo gutture fumant,
> Et latum mediâ sulcum deduciti § arenâ."

"Describe Tigellinus (a creature of Nero,) and you shall suffer the same punishment with those who stand burning in their own flame and

* This is rather a paraphrase, but is justified by what the Scholiast upon Juvenal says; "Nero maleficos homines tædâ et papyro et cerâ supervestiebat, et sic ad ignem admoveri jubebat." Lard. Jewish and Heath. Test. v. i. p. 359

† Suet. Nero, cap. 16. ‡ Sat. i. v. 155. § Forsan "deducis."

smoke, their head being held up by a stake fixed to their chin, till they make a long stream of blood and melted sulphur on the ground."

If this passage were considered by itself, the subject of allusion might be doubtful; but, when connected with the testimony of Suetonius, as to the actual punishment of the Christians by Nero, and with the account given by Tacitus of the *species* of punishment which they were made to undergo, I think it sufficiently probable, that these were the executions to which the poet refers.

These things, as has been observed, took place within thirty-one years after Christ's death, that is, according to the course of nature, in the lifetime, probably, of some of the apostles, and certainly in the lifetime of those who were converted by the apostles, or who were converted in their time. If then the Founder of the religion was put to death in the execution of his design; if the first race of converts to the religion, many of them, suffered the greatest extremities for their profession; it is hardly credible, that those who came *between* the two, who were companions of the Author of the institution during his life, and the teachers and propagators of the institution after his death, could go about their undertaking with ease and safety.

The testimony of the younger Pliny belongs to a later period; for although he was contemporary with Tacitus and Suetonius, yet his account does not, like theirs, go back to the transactions of Nero's reign; but is confined to the affairs of his own time. His celebrated letter to Trajan was written about seventy years after Christ's death; and the information to be drawn from it, so far as it is connected with our argument, relates principally to two points: first, to the *number* of Christians in Bithynia and Pontus, which was so considerable as to induce the governor of these provinces to speak of them in the following terms: "Multi, omnis ætatis, utriusque sexûs etiam;—neque enim civitates tantùm, sed vicos etiam et agros, superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est." "There are many of every age, and of both sexes;—nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but smaller towns also, and the open country." Great exertions must have been used by the preachers of Christianity to produce the state of things within this time. Secondly, to a point which has been already noticed, and which I think of importance to be observed, namely, the sufferings to which Christians were exposed, *without* any public persecution being denounced against them by sovereign authority. For, from Pliny's doubt how he was to act, his silence concerning any subsisting law on the subject, his requesting the emperor's rescript, and the emperor, agreeably to his request, propounding a rule for his direction, without reference to any prior rule, it may be inferred, that there was, at that time, no public edict in force against the Christians. Yet from this same epistle of Pliny it apears, "that accusations, trials, and examinations, were, and had been, going on against them in the provinces over which he presided: that schedules were delivered by anonymous informers, containing the names of persons who were suspected of holding or favouring the religion; that in consequence of these informations, many had been apprehended, of whom some boldly avowed their profession, and died in the cause; others denied that they were Christians; others, acknowledging that they had once been Christians, declared that they had long ceased to be such." All which de-

monstrates, that the profession of Christianity was at that time (in that country at least) attended with fear and danger: and yet this took place without any edict from the Roman sovereign, commanding or authorizing the persecution of Christians. This observation is farther confirmed by a rescript of Adrian to Minucius Fundanus, the proconsul of Asia:* from which rescript it appears that the custom of the people of Asia was to proceed against the Christians with tumult and uproar. This disorderly practice, I say, is recognized in the edict, because the emperor enjoins, that, for the future, if the Christians were guilty, they should be legally brought to trial, and not be pursued by importunity and clamour.

Martial wrote a few years before the younger Pliny, and, as his manner was, made the sufferings of the Christians the subject of his ridicule.† Nothing, however, could shew the notoriety of the fact with more certainty, than this does. Martial's testimony, as well indeed as Pliny's, goes also to another point, viz. that the deaths of these men were martyrdoms in the strictest sense, that is to say, were so voluntary, that it was in their power, at the time of pronouncing the sentence, to have averted the execution, by consenting to join in their heathen sacrifices.

The constancy, and by consequence the sufferings, of the Christians of this period, is also referred to by Epictetus, who imputes their intrepidity to madness, or to a kind of fashion or habit; and about fifty years afterward, by Marcus Aurelius, who ascribes it to obstinacy. "Is it possible (Epictetus asks,) that a man may arrive at this temper, and become indifferent to those things, from madness or from habit, *as the Galileans?*"‡ "Let this preparation of the mind (to die) arise from its own judgment, and not from obstinacy *like the Christians.*"§

CHAPTER III.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

OF the primitive condition of Christianity, a distant only and general view can be acquired from heathen writers. It is in our own books that the detail and interior of the transaction must be sought for. And

* Lard. Heath. Test. vol. ii. p. 110.

† In matutinâ nuper spectatus arenâ
Mucius, imposuit qui sua membra focis,
Si patiens fortisque tibi durusque videtur,
Abderitanæ pectora plebis habes;
Num cum dicatur, tunicâ præsente molestâ,
Ure * manum: plus est dicere, Non facio.

* Forsan "thure manum."

‡ Epict. l. iv. c. 7. § Marc. Aur. Med. l. xi. c. 3.

this is nothing different from what might be expected. Who would write a history of Christianity, but a Christian? who was likely to record the travels, sufferings, labours, or successes, of the apostles, but one of their own number, or of their followers? Now these books come up in their accounts to the full extent of the proposition which we maintain. We have four histories of Jesus Christ. We have a history taking up the narrative from his death, and carrying on an account of the propagation of the religion, and of some of the most eminent persons engaged in it, for a space of nearly thirty years. We have what some may think still more original, a collection of letters, written by certain principal agents in the business, upon the business, and in the midst of their concern and connexion with it. And we have these writings severally attesting the point which we contend for, viz. the sufferings of the witnesses of the history, and attesting it in every variety of form in which it can be conceived to appear: directly and indirectly, expressly and incidentally, by assertion, recital, and allusion, by narratives of facts, and by arguments and discourses built upon these facts, either referring to them, or necessarily presupposing them.

I remark this variety, because, in examining ancient records, or indeed any species of testimony, it is, in my opinion, of the greatest importance to attend to the information or grounds of argument which are *casually* and *undesignedly* disclosed; forasmuch as this species of proof is, of all others, the least liable to be corrupted by fraud or misrepresentation.

I may be allowed therefore, in the inquiry which is now before us, to suggest some conclusions of this sort, as preparatory to more direct testimony.

1. Our books relate, that Jesus Christ, the founder of the religion, was, in consequence of his undertaking, put to death as a malefactor, at Jerusalem. This point at least will be granted, because it is no more than what Tacitus has recorded. They then proceed to tell us, that the religion was, *notwithstanding*, set forth at this same city of Jerusalem, propagated thence throughout Judea, and afterward preached in other parts of the Roman empire. These points also are fully confirmed by Tacitus, who informs us, that the religion, after a short check, broke out again in the country where it took its rise; that it not only spread throughout Judea, but had reached Rome, and that it had there great multitudes of converts: and all this within thirty years after its commencement. Now these facts afford a strong inference in behalf of the proposition which we maintain. What could the disciples of Christ expect for themselves, when they saw their Master put to death? Could they hope to escape the dangers in which he had perished? If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you, was the warning of common sense. With this example before their eyes, they could not be without a full sense of the peril of their future enterprise.

2. Secondly, all the histories agree in representing Christ as foretelling the persecution of his followers:—

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."*

* Matt. xxiv. 9.

"When affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended."*

"They shall lay hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake:—and ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death."†

"The time cometh, that he that killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them."‡

I am not entitled to argue from these passages, that Christ actually did foretell these events, and that they did accordingly come to pass; because that would be at once to assume the truth of the religion: but I am entitled to contend, that one side or other of the following disjunction is true; either that the evangelists have delivered what Christ really spoke, and that the event corresponded with the prediction; or, that they put the prediction into Christ's mouth, because, at the time of writing the history, the event had turned out so to be: for, the only two remaining suppositions appear in the highest degree incredible; which are, either that Christ filled the minds of his followers with fears and apprehensions, without any reason or authority for what he said, and contrary to the truth of the case; or that, although Christ had never foretold any such thing, and the event would have contradicted him if he had, yet historians, who lived in the age when the event was known, falsely, as well as officiously, ascribed these words to him.

3. Thirdly, these books abound with exhortations to patience, and with topics of comfort under distress.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."§

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body;—knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.——For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."‖

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the

* Mark iv. 17. See also chap. x. 30.
† Luke xxi. 12—16. See also chap. xi. 49.
‡ John xvi. 4. See also chap. xv. 20, xvi. 33.
§ Rom. viii. 35—37.
‖ 2 Cor. iv. 8—10. 14. 16, 17.

patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."*

"Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used; for ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward; for ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."†

"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom, for which ye also suffer."‡

"We rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope."§

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.——Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator."‖

What could all these texts mean, if there was nothing in the circumstances of the times which required patience,—which called for the exercise of constancy and resolution? or will it be pretended, that these exhortations (which, let it be observed, come not from one author, but from many) were put in, merely to induce a belief in after ages, that the Christians were exposed to dangers which they were not exposed to, or underwent sufferings which they did not undergo? If these books belong to the age to which they lay claim, and in which age, whether genuine or spurious, they certainly did appear, this supposition cannot be maintained for a moment; because I think it impossible to believe, that passages, which must be deemed not only unintelligible, but false, by the persons into whose hands the books upon their publication were to come, should nevertheless be inserted, for the purpose of producing an effect upon remote generations. In forgeries which do not appear till many ages after that to which they pretend to belong, it is possible that some contrivance of that sort may take place; but in no others can it be attempted.

* James v. 10, 11.
† Heb. x. 32—36. ‡ 2 Thess. i. 4, 5.
§ Rom. v. 3, 4. ‖ 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. 19

CHAPTER IV.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

THE account of the treatment of the religion, and of the exertions of its first preachers, as stated in our Scriptures (not in a professed history of persecutions, or in the connected manner in which I am about to recite it, but dispersedly and occasionally in the course of a mixed general history, which circumstance alone negatives the supposition of any fraudulent design,) is the following: "That the founder of Christianity, from the commencement of his ministry to the time of his violent death, employed himself wholly in publishing the institution in Judea and Galilee; that in order to assist him in this purpose, he made choice, out of the number of his followers, of twelve persons who might accompany him as he travelled from place to place; that, except a brief absence upon a short journey in which he sent them, two by two, to announce his mission, and one, of a few days, when they went before him to Jerusalem, these persons were statedly and constantly attending upon him; that they were with him at Jerusalem when he was apprehended and put to death; and that they were commissioned by him, when his own ministry was concluded, to publish his gospel, and collect disciples to it from all countries of the world." The account then proceeds to state, "that a few days after his departure, these persons, with some of his relations, and some who had regularly frequented their society, assembled at Jerusalem; that considering the office of preaching the religion as now devolved upon them, and one of their number having deserted the cause, and, repenting of his perfidy, having destroyed himself, they proceeded to elect another into his place, and that they were careful to make their election out of the number of those who had accompanied their Master from the first to the last, in order, as they alledged, that he might be a witness, together with themselves, of the principal facts which they were about to produce and relate concerning him;* that they began their work at Jerusalem by publicly asserting that this Jesus, whom the rulers and inhabitants of that place had so lately crucified, was, in truth, the person in whom all their prophecies and long expectations terminated; that he had been sent amongst them by God, and that he was appointed by God the future judge of the human species; that all who were solicitous to secure to themselves happiness after death, ought to receive him as such, and to make profession of their belief, by being baptized in his name."† The history goes on to relate, "that considerable numbers accepted this proposal, and that they who did so, formed amongst themselves a strict union and society;‡ that the attention of

* Acts i. 21, 22. † Acts xi. ‡ Acts iv. 32.

the Jewish government being soon drawn upon them, two of the principal persons of the twelve, and who also had lived most intimately and constantly with the Founder of the religion, were seized as they were discoursing to the people in the temple; that after being kept all night in prison, they were brought the next day before an assembly composed of the chief persons of the Jewish magistracy and priesthood; that this assembly, after some consultation, found nothing at that time better to be done towards suppressing the growth of the sect, than to threaten their prisoners with punishment if they persisted; that these men, after expressing in decent but firm language, the obligation under which they considered themselves to be, to declare what they knew, 'to speak the things which they had seen and heard,' returned from the council, and reported what had passed to their companions; that this report, whilst it apprised them of the danger of their situation and undertaking, had no other effect upon their conduct, than to produce in them a general resolution to persevere, and an earnest prayer to God to furnish them with assistance, and to inspire them with fortitude proportioned to the increasing exigency of the service."* A very short time after this, we read "that all the twelve apostles were seized and cast into prison;† that being brought a second time before the Jewish Sanhedrim, they were upbraided with their disobedience to the injunction which had been laid upon them, and beaten for their contumacy; that, being charged once more to desist they were suffered to depart; that however they neither quitted Jerusalem nor ceased from preaching, both daily in the temple, and from house to house;‡ and that the twelve considered themselves as so entirely and exclusively devoted to this office, that they now transferred what may be called the temporal affairs of the society to other hands."§

Hitherto the preachers of the new religion seem to have had the common people on their side; which is assigned as the reason why the Jewish rulers did not, at this time, think it prudent to proceed to greater extremities. It was not long, however, before the enemies of the institution found means to represent it to the people as tending to subvert their law, degrade their lawgiver, and dishonour their temple.‖ And

* Acts iv. † Acts v. 18. ‡ Acts v. 42.

§ I do not know that it has ever been insinuated, that the Christian mission, in the hands of the apostles, was a scheme for making a fortune, or for getting money. But it may nevertheless be fit to remark upon this passage of their history, how perfectly free they appear to have been from any pecuniary or interested views whatever. The most tempting opportunity which occurred, of making a gain of their converts, was by the custody and management of the public funds, when some of the richer members, intending to contribute their fortunes to the common support of the society, sold their possessions, and laid down the prices at the apostles' feet. Yet, so insensible, or undesirous, were they of the advantage which that confidence afforded, that we find they very soon disposed of the trust, by putting it into the hands, not of nominees of their own, but of stewards formally elected for the purpose by the society at large.

We may add also, that this excess of generosity, which cast private property into the public stock, was so far from being required by the apostles, or imposed as a law of Christianity, that Peter reminds Ananias that he had been guilty, in his behaviour, of an officious and voluntary prevarication; "for whilst (says he) thy estate remained unsold, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?"

‖ Acts. vi. 12.

these insinuations were dispersed with so much success, as to induce the people to join with their superiors in the stoning of a very active member of the new community.

The death of this man was the signal of a general persecution, the activity of which may be judged of from one anecdote of the time: "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison."* This persecution raged at Jerusalem with so much fury as to drive most of the new converts out of the place, except the twelve apostles.† The converts, thus "scattered abroad," preached the religion wherever they came; and their preaching was in effect, the preaching of the *twelve;* for it was so far carried on in concert and correspondence with *them,* that when they heard of the success of their emissaries in a particular country, they sent two of their number to the place, to complete and confirm the mission.

An event now took place, of great importance in the future history of the religion. The persecution‡ which had began at Jerusalem, followed the Christians to other cities, in which the authority of the Jewish Sanhedrim over those of their own nation was allowed to be exercised. A young man, who had signalized himself by his hostility to the profession, and had procured a commission from the council at Jerusalem to seize any converted Jews whom he might find at Damascus, suddenly became a proselyte to the religion which he was going about to extirpate. The new convert not only shared, on this extraordinary change, the fate of his companions, but brought upon himself a double measure of enmity from the party which he had left. The Jews at Damascus, on his return to that city, watched the gates night and day with so much diligence, that he escaped from their hands only by being let down in a basket by the wall. Nor did he find himself in greater safety at Jerusalem, whither he immediately repaired. Attempts were there also soon set on foot to destroy him; from the danger of which he was preserved by being sent away to Cilicia, his native country.

For some reasons not mentioned, perhaps not known, but probably connected with the civil history of the Jews, or with some danger§ which engrossed the public attention, an intermission about this time took place in the sufferings of the Christians. This happened, at the most, only seven or eight, perhaps only three or four, years after Christ's death. Within which period, and notwithstanding that the late persecution occupied part of it, churches, or societies of believers, had been formed in all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; for we read that the churches in these countries "had *now rest,* and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost,

* Acts viii. 3.

† Acts viii. 1, "And they were *all* scattered abroad:" but the term "all" is not, I think, to be taken strictly as denoting more than the *generality;* in like manner as in Acts ix. 35, "And *all* that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord."

‡ Acts ix.

§ Dr. Lardner (in which he is followed also by Dr. Benson) ascribes this cessation of the persecution of the Christians to the attempt of Caligula to set up his own statue in the temple of Jerusalem, and to the consternation thereby excited in the minds of the Jewish people; which consternation, for a season, suspended every other contest.

were multiplied."* The original preachers of the religion did not remit their labours or activity during this season of quietness, for we find one, and he a very principal person among them, passing throughout all quarters. We find also those who had been before expelled from Jerusalem by the persecution which raged there, travelling as far as Phœnice, Cyprus, and Antioch;† and lastly, we find Jerusalem again in the centre of the mission, the place whither the preachers returned from their several excursions, where they reported the conduc and effects of their ministry, where questions of public concern were canvassed and settled; whence directions were sought, and teachers sent forth.

The time of this tranquillity did not, however, continue long. Herod Agrippa, who had lately acceded to the government of Judea, "stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church."‡ He began his cruelty by beheading one of the twelve original apostles, a kinsman and constant companion of the Founder of the religion. Perceiving that this execution gratified the Jews, he proceeded to seize, in order to put to death, another of the number,—and him, like the former, associated with Christ during his life, and eminently active in the service since his death. This man was, however, delivered from prison, as the account states,§ miraculously, and made his escape from Jerusalem.

These things are related, not in the general terms under which, in giving the outlines of the history, we have here mentioned them, but with the utmost particularity of names, persons, places, and circumstances; and, what is deserving of notice, without the smallest discoverable propensity in the historian to magnify the fortitude or exaggerate the sufferings of his party. When they fled for their lives, he tells us. When the churches had rest, he remarks it. When the people took their part, he does not leave it without notice. When the apostles were carried a second time before the Sanhedrim, he is careful to observe that they were brought without violence. When milder councils were suggested, he gives us the author of the advice, and the speech which contained it. When, in consequence of this advice, the rulers contented themselves with threatening the apostles, and commanding them to be beaten with stripes, without urging at that time the persecution farther, the historian candidly and distinctly records their forbearance. When, therefore, in other instances, he states heavier persecutions, or actual martyrdoms, it is reasonable to believe that he states them because they were true, and not from any wish to aggravate, in his account, the sufferings which Christians sustained, or to extol, more than it deserved, their patience under them.

Our history now pursues a narrower path. Leaving the rest of the apostles, and the original associates of Christ, engaged in the propagation of the new faith (and who there is not the least reason to believe abated in their diligence or courage), the narrative proceeds with the separate memoirs of that eminent teacher, whose extraordinary and sudden conversion to the religion, and corresponding change of conduct, had before been circumstantially described. This person, in conjunction with another, who appeared among the earlier members of the society at Jerusalem, and amongst the immediate adherents||

* Acts ix. 31. † Acts xi. 19.
‡ Acts xi. 19. § Ibid. ver. 3—17.
|| Acts iv. 36.

of the twelve apostles, set out from Antioch upon the express business of carrying the new religion through the various provinces of the Lesser Asia.* During this expedition, we find, that in almost every place to which they came, their persons were insulted, and their lives endangered. After being expelled from Antioch in Pisidia, they repaired to Iconium.† At Iconium, an attempt was made to stone them; at Lystra, whither they fled from Iconium, one of them actually was stoned and drawn out of the city for dead.‡ These two men, though not themselves original apostles, were acting in connexion and conjunction with the original apostles; for after the completion of their journey, being sent on a particular commission to Jerusalem, they there related to the apostles§ and elders the events and success of their ministry, and were, in return, recommended by them to the churches, "as men who had hazarded their lives in the cause."

The treatment which they had experienced in the first progress, did not deter them from preparing for a second. Upon a dispute, however, arising between them, but not connected with the common subject of their labours, they acted as wise and sincere men would act; they did not retire in disgust from the service in which they were engaged, but each devoting his endeavours to the advancement of the religion, they parted from one another, and set forwards upon separate routs. The history goes along with one of them; and the second enterprise to him was attended with the same dangers and persecutions as both had met with in the first. The apostle's travels hitherto had been confined to Asia. He now crosses, for the first time, the Ægean Sea, and carries with him, amongst others, the person whose accounts supply the information we are stating.‖ The first place in Greece at which he appears to have stopped, was Philippi, in Macedonia. Here himself and one of his companions were cruelly whipped, cast into prison, and kept there under the most rigorous custody, being thrust, whilst yet smarting with their wounds, into the inner dungeon, and their feet made fast in the stocks.¶ Notwithstanding this unequivocal specimen of the usage which they had to look for in that country, they went forward in the execution of their errand. After passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica; in which city, the house in which they lodged was assailed by a party of their enemies, in order to bring them out to the populace. And when, fortunately for their preservation, they were not found at home, the master of the house was dragged before the magistrate for admitting them within his doors.** Their reception at the next city was something better: but neither had they continued long before their turbulent adversaries, the Jews, excited against them such commotions amongst the inhabitants, as obliged the apostle to make his escape by a private journey to Athens.†† The extremity of the progress was Corinth. His abode in this city, for some time, seems to have been without molestation. At length, however, the Jews found means to stir up an insurrection against him, and to bring him before the tribunal of

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* Acts xiii. 2.
† Ibid. ver. 51.
‡ Acts xiv. 19.
§ Acts xv. 12—26.
‖ Acts xvi. 11.
¶ Ibid. ver. 23, 24, 33.
** Acts xvii 1—5.
†† Ibid. ver. 13.

the Roman president.* It was to the contempt which that magistrate entertained for the Jews and their controversies, of which he accounted Christianity to be one, that our apostle owed his deliverance.†

This indefatigable teacher, after leaving Corinth, returned by Ephesus into Syria; and again visited Jerusalem, and the society of Christians in that city, which, as hath been repeatedly observed, still continued the centre of the mission.‡ It suited not, however, with the activity of his zeal to remain long at Jerusalem. We find him going thence to Antioch, and, after some stay there, traversing once more the northern provinces of Asia Minor.§ This progress ended at Ephesus; in which city, the apostle continued in the daily exercise of his ministry two years, and until his success at length excited the apprehensions of those who were interested in the support of the national worship. Their clamour produced a tumult, in which he had nearly lost his life.‖ Undismayed, however, by the dangers to which he saw himself exposed, he was driven from Ephesus only to renew his labours in Greece. After passing over Macedonia, he thence proceeded to his former station at Corinth.¶ When he had formed his design of returning by a direct course from Corinth into Syria, he was compelled, by a conspiracy of the Jews, who were prepared to intercept him on his way, to trace back his steps through Macedonia to Philippi, and thence to take shipping into Asia. Along the coast of Asia, he pursued his voyage with all the expedition he could command, in order to reach Jerusalem against the feast of Pentecost.** His reception at Jerusalem was of a piece with the usage he had experienced from the Jews in other places. He had been only a few days in that city, when the populace, instigated by some of his old opponents in Asia, who attended this feast, seized him in the temple, forced him out of it, and were ready immediately to have destroyed him, had not the sudden presence of the Roman guard, rescued him out of their hands.†† The officer, however, who had thus seasonably interposed, acted from his care of the public peace, with the preservation of which he was charged, and not from any favour to the apostle, or indeed any disposition to exercise either justice or humanity towards him; for he had no sooner secured his person in the fortress, than he was proceeding to examine him by torture.‡‡

From this time to the conclusion of the history, the apostle remains in public custody of the Roman government. After escaping assassination by a fortunate discovery of the plot, and delivering himself from the influence of his enemies by an appeal to the audience of the emperor,§§ he was sent, but not until he had suffered two years' imprisonment, to Rome.‖‖‖ He reached Italy after a tedious voyage, and after encountering in his passage the perils of a desperate shipwreck.¶¶ But although still a prisoner, and his fate still depending, neither the various and long-continued sufferings which he had undergone, nor the danger of his present situation, deterred him from per-

* Acts xviii. 12.
† Ibid. ver. 15.
‡ Ibid. ver. 22.
§ Acts xviii. 23.
‖ Acts xix. 1. 9. 10.
¶ Acts xx. 1, 2.
** Ibid. ver. 16.
†† Acts xxi. 27—33.
‡‡ Acts xxii. 24.
§§ Acts xxv. 9. 11.
‖‖‖ Acts xxiv. 27.
¶¶ Acts xxvii.

sisting in preaching the religion; for the historian closes the account by telling us, that for two years he received all that came unto him in his own hired house, where he was permitted to dwell with a soldier that guarded him, "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence."

Now the historian, from whom we have drawn this account, in the part of his narrative which relates to Saint Paul, is supported by the strongest corroborating testimony that a history can receive. We are in possession of letters written by Saint Paul himself upon the subject of his ministry, and either written during the period which the history comprises, or, if written afterward, reciting and referring to the transactions of that period. These letters, without borrowing from the history, or the history from them, unintentionally confirm the account which the history delivers, in a great variety of particulars. What belongs to our present purpose is the description exhibited of the apostles' sufferings: and the representation given in the history of the dangers and distresses which he underwent, not only agrees in general with the language which he himself uses whenever he speaks of his life or ministry, but is also, in many instances, attested by a specific correspondency of time, place, and order, of events. If the historian put down in his narrative, that at Philippi the apostle "was beaten with many stripes, cast into prison, and there treated with rigour and indignity;"* we find him, in a letter to a neighbouring church,† reminding his converts, that, "after he had suffered before, and was shamefully treated at Philippi, he was bold, nevertheless, to speak unto them (to whose city he next came) the gospel of God." If the history relate,‡ that at Thessalonica, the house in which the apostle was lodged, when first he came to that place, was assaulted by the populace, and the master of it dragged before the magistrate for admitting such a guest within his doors; the apostle, in his letter to the Christians of Thessalonica, calls to their remembrance "how they had received the gospel in much affliction."§ If the history deliver an account of an insurrection at Ephesus, which had nearly cost the apostle his life; we have the apostle himself, in a letter written a short time after his departure from that city, describing his despair, and returning thanks for his deliverance.‖ If the history inform us, that the apostle was expelled from Antioch in Pisidia, attempted to be stoned at Iconium, and actually stoned at Lystra; there is preserved a letter from him to a favourite convert, whom, as the same history tells us, he first met with in these parts; in which letter he appeals to that disciple's knowledge "of the persecutions which befel him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra."¶ If the history make the apostle, in his speech to the Ephesian elders, remind them, as one proof of the disinterestedness of his views, that, to their knowledge, he had supplied his own and the necessities of his companions by personal labour;** we find the same apostle, in a letter written during his

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* Acts xvi. 23, 24. † 1 Thess. ii. 2.
‡ Acts xvii. 5. § 1 Thess. i. 6.
‖ Acts xix. 2 Cor. i. 8—10.
¶ Acts xiii. 50. xiv. 5. 19. 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.
** Acts xx. 34.

residence at Ephesus, asserting of himself, "that even to that hour he laboured, working with his own hands."*

These coincidences, together with many relative to other parts of the apostle's history, and *all* drawn from independent sources, not only confirm the truth of the account, in the particular points as to which they are observed, but add much to the credit of the narrative in all its parts; and support the author's profession of being a contemporary of the person whose history he writes, and throughout a material portion of his narrative, a companion.

What the epistles of the apostles declare of the suffering state of Christianity, the writings which remain of their companions and immediate followers expressly confirm.

Clement, who is honourably mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians,† hath left us his attestation to this point, in the following words: "Let us take (says he) the examples of our own age. Through zeal and envy, the most faithful and righteous pillars of the church have been persecuted even to the most grievous deaths. Let us set before our eyes *the holy apostles.* Peter, by unjust envy, underwent, not one or two, but many sufferings; till at last, being martyred, he went to the place of glory that was due unto him. For the same cause did Paul, in like manner, receive the reward of his patience. Seven times he was in bonds; he was whipped, was stoned; he preached both in the East and in the West, leaving behind him the glorious report of his faith; and so having taught the whole world righteousness, and for that end travelled even unto the utmost bounds of the West, he at last suffered martyrdom by command of the governors, and departed out of the world, and went unto his holy place, being become a most eminent pattern of patience unto all ages. To these holy apostles were joined a very great number of others, who, having through envy undergone, in like manner, many pains and torments, have left a glorious example to us. For this, not only men, but women, have been persecuted; and, having suffered very grievous and cruel punishments, have finished the course of their faith with firmness."‡

Hermas, saluted by Saint Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, in a piece very little connected with historical recitals, thus speaks: "Such as have believed and suffered death for the name of Christ, and have endured with a ready mind, and have given up their lives with all their hearts."§

Polycarp, the disciple of John (though all that remains of his works be a very short epistle), has not left this subject unnoticed. "I exhort (says he) all of you, that ye obey the word of righteousness, and exercise all patience, which ye have seen set forth before your eyes, not only in the blessed Ignatius, and Lorimus, and Rufus, but in others among yourselves, and in *Paul himself and the rest of the apostles;* being confident in this, that all these have not run in vain; but in faith and righteousness; and are gone to the place that was due to them from the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they

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* 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12. † Philipp. iv. 3.
‡ Clem. ad Cor. c. v. vi. Abp. Wake's Trans.
§ Shepherd of Hermas, c. xxviii.

loved not this present world, but Him who died, and was raised again by God for us."*

Ignatius, the contemporary of Polycarp, recognises the same topic, briefly indeed, but positively and precisely. "For this cause (*i. e.* having felt and handled Christ's body after his resurrection, and being convinced, as Ignatius expresses it, both by his flesh and spirit), they (*i. e.* Peter, and those who were present with Peter at Christ's appearance) despised death, and were found to be above it."†

Would the reader know what a persecution in these days was, I would refer him to a circular letter, written by the church of Smyrna soon after the death of Polycarp, who, it will be remembered, had lived with Saint John: and which letter is entitled a relation of that bishop's martyrdom. "The sufferings (say they) of all the other martyrs, were blessed and generous, which they underwent according to the will of God. For so it becomes us, who are more religious than others, to ascribe the power and ordering of all things unto him. And, indeed, who can choose but admire the greatness of their minds, and the admirable patience and love of their Master, which then appeared in them? Who, when they were so flayed with whipping, that the frame and structure of their bodies were laid open to their very inward veins and arteries, nevertheless endured it. In like manner, those who were condemned to the beasts, and kept a long time in prison, underwent many cruel torments, being forced to lie upon sharp spikes laid under their bodies, and tormented with divers other sorts of punishments; that so, if it were possible, the tyrant, by the length of their sufferings, might have brought them to deny Christ."‡

CHAPTER V.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

ON the history, of which the last chapter contains an abstract, there are a few observations, which it may be proper to make, by way of applying its testimony to the particular propositions for which we contend.

I. Although our Scripture history leaves the general account of the apostles in an early part of the narrative, and proceeds with the separate account of one particular apostle, yet the information which is delivers so far extends to the rest, as it shows *the nature of the service.* When we see one apostle suffering persecution in the discharge of his commission, we shall not believe, without evidence,

* Pol. ad Phil c. ix. † 19 Ep. Smyr. c. iii.
‡ Rel. Mpr. Pol. c. ii.

that the same office could, at the same time, be attended with ease and safety to others. And this fair and reasonable inference is confirmed by the direct attestation of the letters, to which we have so often referred. The writer of these letters not only alludes, in numerous passages, to his own sufferings, but speaks of the rest of the apostles as enduring like sufferings with himself. "I think that God hath set forth *us the apostles* last, as it were, appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men;—even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and as the off-scouring of all things unto this day."* Add to which, that in the short account that is given of the other apostles in the former part of the history, and within the short period which that account comprises, we find, first, two of them seized, imprisoned, brought before the Sanhedrim, and threatened with farther punishment;† then, the whole number imprisoned and beaten:‡ soon afterward, one of their adherents stoned to death, and so hot a persecution raised against the sect, as to drive most of them out of the place; a short time only succeeding, before one of the twelve was beheaded, and another sentenced to the same fate; and all this passing in the single city of Jerusalem, and within ten years after the Founder's death, and the commencement of the institution.

II. We take no credit at present for the miraculous part of the narrative, nor do we insist upon the correctness of single passages of it. If the whole story be not a novel, a romance; the whole action a dream; if Peter, and James, and Paul, and the rest of the apostles mentioned in the account, be not all imaginary persons; if their letters be not all forgeries, and, what is more, forgeries of names and characters which never existed; then is there evidence in our hands sufficient to support the only fact we contend for (and which, I repeat again, is, in itself, highly probable), that the original followers of Jesus Christ exerted great endeavours to propagate his religion, and underwent great labours, dangers, and sufferings, in consequence of their undertaking.

III. The general reality of the apostolic history is strongly confirmed by the consideration, that it, in truth, does no more than assign adequate causes for effects which certainly were produced, and describe consequences naturally resulting from situations which certainly existed. The *effects* were certainly there, of which this history sets forth the cause, and origin, and progress. It is acknowleged on all hands, because it is recorded by other testimony than that of the Christians themselves, that the religion began to prevail at that time, and in that country. It is very difficult to conceive how it could begin, or prevail at all, without the exertions of the Founder and his followers in propagating the new persuasion. The history now in our hands describes these exertions, the persons employed, the means and endeavours made use of, and the labours undertaken in the prosecution of

* 1 Cor. iv. 9, &c. † Acts iv. 3. 21. ‡ Acts v. 18. 40.

this purpose. Again, the treatment which the history represents the first propagators of the religion to have experienced, was no other than what naturally resulted from the situation in which they were confessedly placed. It is admitted that the religion was adverse, in a great degree, to the reigning opinions, and to the hopes and wishes of the nation to which it was first introduced; and that it overthrew, so far as it was received, the established theology and worship of every other country. We cannot feel much reluctance in believing, that, when the messengers of such a system went about not only publishing their opinions, but collecting proselytes, and forming regular societies of proselytes, they should meet with opposition in their attempts, or that this opposition should sometimes proceed to fatal extremities. Our history details examples of this opposition, and of the sufferings and dangers which the emissaries of the religion underwent, perfectly agreeable to what might reasonably be expected from the nature of their undertaking, compared with the character of the age and country in which it was carried on.

IV. The records before us supply evidence of what formed another member of our general proposition, and what, as hath already been observed, is highly probable, and almost a necessary consequence of their new profession; viz. that, together with activity and courage in propagating the religion, the primitive followers of Jesus assumed, upon their conversion, a new and peculiar course of private life, immediately after their Master was withdrawn from them, we hear of their "continuing with one accord in prayer and supplication;"* of their "continuing daily with one accord in the temple;"† of "many being gathered together praying."‡ We know what strict injunctions were laid upon the converts by their teachers. Wherever they came, the first word of their preaching was, "Repent!" We know that these injunctions obliged them to refrain from many species of licentiousness, which were not, at that time, reputed criminal. We know the rules of purity, and the maxims of benevolence, which Christians read in their books; concerning which rules, it is enough to observe, that, if they were, I will not say completely obeyed, but in any degree regarded, they would produce a system of conduct, and, what is more difficult to preserve, a disposition of mind, and a regulation of affections, different from any thing to which they had hitherto been accustomed, and different from what they would see in others. The change and distinction of manners, which resulted from their new character, is perpetually referred to in the letters of their teachers. "And you hath he quickened, who *were* dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in *times past* ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."§—"For the *time past of our life* may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries; *wherein they think it strange that ye run*

* Acts i. 14. † Acts ii. 46. ‡ Acts xii. 12.
§ Eph. ii. 1—3. See also Tit. iii. 3.

not with them to the same excess of riot."* Saint Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, after enumerating, as his manner was, a catalogue of vicious characters, adds, "Such *were* some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified."† In like manner, and alluding to the same change of practices and sentiments, he asks the Roman Christians, "what fruit they had in those things, whereof they are *now* ashamed?"‡ The phrases, which the same writer employs to describe the moral condition of Christians, compared with their condition before they became Christians, such as "newness of life," being "freed from sin," being "dead to sin;" "the destruction of the body of sin, that, *for the future*, they should not serve sin;" "children of light, and of the day," as opposed to "children of darkness and of the night;" "not sleeping as others;" imply, at least, a new system of obligation, and, probably, a new series of conduct, commencing with their conversion.

The testimony which Pliny bears to the behaviour of the new sect in his time, and which testimony comes not more than fifty years after that of Saint Paul, is very applicable to the subject under consideration. The character which this writer gives of the Christians of that age, and which was drawn from a pretty accurate inquiry, because he considered their moral principles as the point in which the magistrate was interested, is as follows:—He tells the emperor, "that some of those who had relinquished the society, or who, to save themselves, pretended that they had relinquished it, affirmed that they were wont to meet together, on a stated day, before it was light, and sang among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as a god; and to bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but that they would not be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery; that they would never falsify their word or deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it." This proves that a morality, more pure and strict than was ordinary, prevailed at that time in the Christian societies. And to me it appears, that we are authorized to carry this testimony back to the age of the apostles; because it is not probable that the immediate hearers and disciples of Christ were more relaxed than their successors in Pliny's time; or the missionaries of the religion, than those whom they taught.

CHAPTER VI.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

WHEN we consider, first, the prevalency of the religion at this hour; secondly, the only credible account which can be given of its

* 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. † 1 Cor. vi. 11. ‡ Rom. vi. 21.

origin, viz. the activity of the Founder and his associates, thirdly, the opposition which that activity must naturally have excited; fourthly, the fate of the Founder of the religion, attested by heathen writers as well as our own; fifthly, the testimony of the same writers to the sufferings of Christians, either contemporary with, or immediately succeeding, the original settlers of the institution; sixthly, predictions of the sufferings of his followers ascribed to the Founder of the religion, which ascription alone proves, either that such predictions were delivered and fulfilled, or that the writers of Christ's life were induced by the event to attribute such predictions to him; seventhly, letters now in our possession, written by some of the principal agents in the transaction, referring expressly to extreme labours, dangers, and sufferings, sustained by themselves and their companions; lastly, a history purporting to be written by a fellow-traveller of one of the new teachers, and, by its unsophisticated correspondency with letters of that person still extant, proving itself to be written by some one well acquainted with the subject of the narrative, which history contains accounts of travels, persecutions, and martyrdoms, answering to what the former reasons lead us to expect: when we lay together these considerations, which taken separately, are, I think, correctly, such as I have stated them in the preceding chapters, there cannot much doubt remain upon our minds, but that a number of persons at that time appeared in the world, publicly advancing an extraordinary story, and, for the sake of propagating the belief of that story, voluntarily incurring great personal dangers, traversing seas and kingdoms, exerting great industry, and sustaining great extremities of ill usage and persecution. It is also proved, that the same persons, in consequence of their persuasion, or pretended persuasion, of the truth of what they asserted, entered upon a course of life in many respects new and singular.

From the clear and acknowledged parts of the case, I think it to be likewise in the highest degree probable, that the story, for which these persons voluntarily exposed themselves to the fatigues and hardships which they endured, was a *miraculous* story; I mean, that they pretended to miraculous evidence of some kind or other. They had nothing else to stand upon. The designation of the person, that is to say, that Jesus of Nazareth, rather than any other person, was the Messiah, and as such, the subject of their ministry could only be founded upon supernatural tokens attributed to him. Here were no victories, no conquests, no revolutions, no surprising elevation of fortune, no achievements of valour, of strength, or of policy, to appeal to; no discoveries in any art or science, no great efforts of genius or learning to produce.

A Galilean peasant was announced to the world as a divine lawgiver. A young man of mean condition, of a private and simple life, and who had wrought no deliverance for the Jewish nation, was declared to be their Messiah. This, without ascribing to him at the same time some proofs of his mission, (and what other but supernatural proofs could there be?) was too absurd a claim to be either imagined, or attempted, or credited. In whatever degree, or in whatever part, the religion was *argumentative*, when it came to the question, "Is the carpenter's son of Nazareth the person whom we are to re-

ceive and obey?" there was nothing but the miracles attributed to him, by which his pretensions could be maintained for a moment. Every controversy and every question must presuppose these; for, however such controversies, when they did arise, might, and naturally would, be discussed upon their own grounds of argumentation, without citing the miraculous evidence which had been asserted to attend the Founder of the religion (which would have been to enter upon another, and a more general question), yet we are to bear in mind, that without previously supposing the existence, or the pretence of such evidence, there could have been no place for the discussion of the argument at all. Thus, for example, whether the prophecies, which the Jews interpreted to belong to the Messiah, were, or were not, applicable to the history of Jesus of Nazareth, was a natural subject of debate in those times; and the debate would proceed, without recurring at every turn to his miracles, because it set out with supposing these; inasmuch as without miraculous marks and tokens (real or pretended), or without some such great change effected by his means in the public condition of the country, as might have satisfied the then received interpretations of these prophecies, I do not see how the question could ever have been entertained. Apollos, we read, "mightily convinced the Jews, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ;"* but unless Jesus had exhibited some distinction of his person, some proof of supernatural power, the argument from the Old Scriptures could have had no place. It had nothing to attach upon. A young man calling himself the Son of God, gathering a crowd about him, and delivering to them lectures of morality, could not have excited so much as a doubt among the Jews, whether he was the object in whom a long series of ancient prophecies terminated, from the completion of which they had formed such magnificent expectations, and expectations of a nature so opposite to what appeared; I mean, no such doubt could exist when they had the whole case before them, when they saw him put to death for his officiousness, and when by his death the evidence concerning him was closed. Again, the *effect* of the Messiah's coming, supposing Jesus to have been he, upon Jews, upon Gentiles, upon their relation to each other, upon their acceptance with God, upon their duties and their expectations; his nature, authority, office, and agency; were likely to become subjects of much consideration with the early votaries of the religion, and to occupy their attention and writings. I should not however expect, that in these disquisitions, whether preserved in the form of letters, speeches, or set treatises, frequent or very direct mention of his miracles would occur. Still, miraculous evidence lay at the bottom of the argument. In the *primary* question, miraculous pretensions, and miraculous pretensions alone, were what they had to rely upon.

That the original story was miraculous, is very fairly also inferred from the miraculous powers which were laid claim to by the Christians of succeeding ages. If the accounts of these miracles be true, it was a continuation of the same powers; if they be false, it was an *imitation*, I will not say, of what had been wrought, but of what had been reported to have been wrought, by those who preceded them.

* Acts xviii. 28.

That imitation should follow reality, fiction should be grafted upon truth; that if miracles were performed at first, miracles should be pretended afterward; agrees so well with the ordinary course of human affairs, that we can have no great difficulty in believing it. The contrary supposition is very improbable, namely, that miracles should be pretended to by the followers of the apostles and first emissaries of religion, when none were pretended to, either in their own persons or that of their Master, by these apostles and emissaries themselves.

CHAPTER VII.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

IT being then once proved, that the first propagators of the Christian institution did exert activity, and subject themselves to great dangers and sufferings, in consequence, and for the sake of an extraordinary, and, I think we may say, of a miraculous story of some kind or other; the next great question is, Whether the account which our Scriptures contain, be that story; that which these men delivered, and for which they acted and suffered as they did? This question is, in effect, no other than whether the story which Christians have *now*, be the story which Christians had *then*? And of this the following proofs may be deduced from general considerations and from considerations prior to any inquiry into the particular reasons and testimonies by which the authority of our histories is supported.

In the first place there exists no trace or vestige of any other story. It is not, like the death of Cyrus the Great, a competition between opposite accounts, or between the credit of different historians. There is not a document, or scrap of account, either contemporary with the commencement of Christianity, or extant within many ages after that commencement, which assigns a history substantially different from ours. The remote, brief, and incidental notices of the affair, which are found in heathen writers, so far as they do go, go along with us. They bear testimony to the facts:—that the institution originated from Jesus; that the Founder was put to death, as a malefactor, at Jerusalem, by the authority of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate; that the religion nevertheless spread in that city, and throughout Judea; and that it was propagated thence to distant countries; that the converts were numerous; that they suffered great hardships and injuries for their profession; and that all this took place in the age of the world which our books have assigned. They go on farther, to describe the *manners* of Christians, in terms perfectly conformable to the accounts extant in our books; that they were wont to assemble on a certain day; that they sang hymns to Christ as to a God; tha

they bound themselves by an oath not to commit any crime, but to abstain from theft and adultery, to adhere strictly to their promises, and not to deny money deposited in their hands;* that they worshipped him who was crucified in Palestine; that this their first lawgiver had taught them that they were all brethren; that they had a great contempt for the things of this world, and looked upon them as common; that they flew to one another's relief; that they cherished strong hopes of immortality; that they despised death, and surrendered themselves to sufferings."† This is the account of writers who viewed the subject at a great distance; who were uninformed and uninterested about it. It bears the characters of such an account upon the face of it, because it describes effects, namely, the appearance in the world of a new religion, and the conversion of great multitudes to it, without descending, in the smallest degree, to the detail of the transaction upon which it was founded, the interior of the institution, the evidence or arguments offered by those who drew over others to it. Yet still here is no contradiction of our story; no other or different story set up against it: but so far a confirmation of it, as that, in the general points on which the heathen account touches, it agrees with that which we find in our own books.

The same may be observed of the very few Jewish writers, of that and the adjoining period, which have come down to us. Whatever they omit, or whatever difficulties we may find in explaining the omission, they advance no other history of the transaction than that which we acknowledge. Josephus, who wrote his Antiquities, or History of the Jews, about sixty years after the commencement of Christianity, in a passage generally admitted as genuine, makes mention of John, under the name of John the Baptist; that he was a preacher of virtue; that he baptized his proselytes; that he was well received by the people; that he was imprisoned and put to death by Herod; and that Herod lived in a criminal cohabitation with Herodias, his brother's wife.‡ In another passage, allowed by many, although not without considerable question being moved about it, we hear of "James, the brother of him who was called Jesus, and of his being put to death."§ In a third passage, extant in every copy that remains of Josephus's History, but the authenticity of which has nevertheless been long disputed, we have an explicit testimony to the substance of our history

* See Pliny's Letter. Bonnet, in his lively way of expressing himself, says, "Comparing Pliny's Letter with the account in the Acts, it seems to me that I had not taken up another author, but that I was still reading the historian of that extraordinary society." This is strong; but there is undoubtedly an affinity, and all the affinity that could be expected.

† "It is incredible what expedition they use when any of their friends are known to be in trouble. In a word, they spare nothing upon such an occasion; for these miserable men have no doubt they shall be immortal and live for ever: therefore they contemn death, and many surrender themselves to sufferings. Moreover, their first lawgiver has taught them that they are all brethren, when once they have turned and renounced the gods of the Greeks, and worship this Master of theirs who was crucified, and engage to live according to his laws. They have also a sovereign contempt for all the things of this world, and look upon them as common." Lucian. de Morte Peregrini, t. i. p. 565. ed. Græv.

‡ Antiq. l. xviii. cap. v. sect. 1, 2. § Antiq. l. xx. cap. ix. sect. 1.

in these words:—"At that time lived Jesus, a wise man, if he may be called a man, for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many Jews and Gentiles. This was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the instigation of the chief men among us, had condemned him to the cross, they who before had conceived an affection for him, did not cease to adhere to him: for, on the third day, he appeared to them alive again; the divine prophets having foretold these and many wonderful things concerning him. And the sect of the Christians, so called from him, subsists to this time."* Whatever become of the controversy concerning the genuineness of this passage; whether Josephus go the whole length of our history, which, if the passage be sincere, he does; or whether he proceed only a very little way with us, which, if the passage be rejected, we confess to be the case; still what we asserted is true, that he gives no other or different history of the subject from ours, no other or different account of the origin of the institution. And I think also, that it may with great reason be contended, either that the passage is genuine, or that the silence of Josephus was *designed*. For, although we should lay aside the authority of our own books entirely, yet when Tacitus, who wrote not twenty, perhaps not ten, years after Josephus, in his account of a period in which Josephus was nearly thirty years of age, tells us, that a vast multitude of Christians were condemned at Rome; that they derived their denomination from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal, by the procurator Pontius Pilate; that the superstition had spread not only over Judea, the source of the evil, but had reached Rome also:—when Suetonius, an historian contemporary with Tacitus, relates that, in the time of Claudius, the Jews were making disturbances at Rome, Christus being their leader; and that during the reign of Nero, the Christians were punished; under both which emperors Josephus lived:—when Pliny, who wrote his celebrated epistle not more than thirty years after the publication of Josephus's history, found the Christians in such numbers in the province of Bithynia, as to draw from him a complaint that the contagion had seized cities, towns, and villages, and had so seized them as to produce a general desertion of the public rites; and when, as has already been observed; there is no reason for imagining that the Christians were more numerous in Bithynia than in many other parts of the Roman empire: it cannot, I should suppose, after this be believed, that the religion, and the transaction upon which it was founded, were too obscure to engage the attention of Josephus, or to obtain a place in his history. Perhaps he did not know how to represent the business, and disposed of his difficulties by passing it over in silence. Eusebius wrote the life of Constantine, yet omits entirely the most remarkable circumstance in that life, the death of his son Crispus; undoubtedly for the reason here given. The reserve of Josephus upon the subject of Christianity appears also in his passing over the banishment of the Jews by Claudius, which Suetonius, we have seen, has recorded with an express reference to Christ. This is at least as remarkable

* Antiq. l. xviii. cap. iii. sect. 3.

as his silence about the infants of Bethlehem.* Be, however, the fact or the cause of the omission in Josephus,† what it may, no other or different history on the subject has been given by him, or is pretended to have been given.

But farther; the whole series of Christian writers, from the first age of the institution down to the present, in their discussions, apologies, arguments, and controversies, proceed upon the general story which our Scriptures contain, and upon no other. The main facts, the principal agents, are alike in all. This argument will appear to be of great force, when it is known that we are able to trace back the series of writers to a contact with the historical books of the New Testament, and to the age of the first emissaries of the religion, and to deduce it, by an unbroken continuation, from that end of the train to the present.

The remaining letters of the apostles (and what more original than *their* letters can we have?) though written without the remotest design of transmitting the history of Christ, or of Christianity, to future ages, or even of making it known to their contemporaries, incidentally disclose to us the following circumstances:—Christ's descent and family; his innocence; the meekness and gentleness of his character (a recognition which goes to the whole Gospel history); his exalted nature; his circumcision; his transfiguration; his life of opposition and suffering; his patience and resignation; the appointment of the eucharist, and the manner of it; his agony; his confession before Pontius Pilate; his stripes, crucifixion, and burial; his resurrection; his appearance after it, first to Peter, then to the rest of the apostles; his ascension into heaven; and his designation to be the future judge of mankind; the stated residence of the apostles at Jerusalem; the working of miracles by the first preachers of the gospel, who were also the hearers of Christ;‡—the successful propa-

* Michaelis has computed, and, as it should seem, fairly enough, that probably not more than twenty children perished by this cruel precaution. Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament, translated by Marsh, vol. i. c. ii. sect. 11.

† There is no notice taken of Christianity in the Misna, a collection of Jewish traditions compiled about the year 180; although it contains a tract "De cultu peregrino," of strange or idolatrous worship: yet it cannot be disputed but that Christianity was perfectly well known in the world at this time. There is extremely little notice of the subject in the Jerusalem Talmud, compiled about the year 360, and not much more in the Babylonish Talmud, of the year 500; although both these works are of a religious nature, and although, when the first was compiled, Christianity was on the point of becoming the religion of the state, and, when the latter was published, had been so for 200 years.

‡ Heb. ii. 3; "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which, at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us *by them that heard him*; God also bearing them witness, both *with signs and wonders*, and with *divers miracles*, and gifts of the Holy Ghost?" I allege this Epistle without hesitation; for, whatever doubts may have been raised about its author, there can be none concerning the age in which it was written. No epistle in the collection carries about it more indubitable marks of antiquity than this does. It speaks, for instance, throughout, of the temple as then standing, and of the worship of the temple as then subsisting. —Heb. viii. 4; "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing there *are* priests that offer according to the law."—Again, Heb. xiii. 10; "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which *serve* the tabernacle."

gation of the religion; the persecution of its followers; the miraculous conversion of Paul; miracles wrought by himself, and alleged in his controversies with his adversaries, and in letters to the person amongst whom they were wrought; finally, that MIRACLES *were the signs of an apostle.**

In an epistle bearing the name of Barnabas, the companion of Paul, probably genuine, certainly belonging to that age, we have the sufferings of Christ, his choice of apostles and their number, his passion, the scarlet robe, the vinegar and gall, the mocking and piercing, the casting lots for his coat,† his resurrection on the eighth (*i. e.* the first day of the week),‡ and the commemorative distinction of that day, his manifestation after his resurrection, and, lastly, his ascension. We have also his miracles generally but positively referred to in the following words: "Finally, teaching the people of Israel, and *doing many wonders and signs among them*, he preached to them, and shewed the exceeding great love which he bare towards them."§

In an epistle of Clement, a hearer of Saint Paul, although written for a purpose remotely connected with the Christian history, we have the resurrection of Christ, and the subsequent mission of the apostles, recorded in these satisfactory terms: "The apostles have preached to us from our Lord Jesus Christ from God:—for, having received their command, and being *thoroughly assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ*, they went abroad, publishing that the kingdom of God was at hand."‖ We find noticed also, the humility, yet the power of Christ,¶ his descent from Abraham, his crucifixion. We have Peter and Paul represented as faithful and righteous pillars of the church; the numerous sufferings of Peter; the bonds, stripes, and stoning of Paul, and, more particularly, his extensive and unwearied travels.

In an epistle of Polycarp, a disciple of Saint John, though only a brief hortatory letter, we have the humility, patience, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension, of Christ, together with the apostolic character of Saint Paul, distinctly recognised.** Of this same father we are also assured by Irenæus, that he (Irenæus) had heard him relate, "what he had received from eye-witnesses concerning the Lord, both *concerning his miracles* and his doctrine.††

In the remaining works of Ignatius, the contemporary of Polycarp, larger than those of Polycarp (yet, like those of Polycarp, treating of subjects in nowise leading to any recital of the Christian history), the occasional allusions are proportionably more numerous. The descent of Christ from David, his mother Mary, his miraculous conception, the star at his birth, his baptism by John, the reason assigned for it, his appeal to the prophets, the ointment poured on his head, his sufferings under Pontius Pilot and Herod the tetrarch, his resurrection, the Lord's day called and kept in commemoration of it, and the eucharist, in both its parts—are unequivocally referred to. Upon the

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* "Truly *the signs of an apostle* were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." 2 Cor. xii. 12.

† Ep. Bar. c. vii.

‡ Ibid. c. vi.

§ Ibid. c. v.

‖ Ep. Clem. Rom. c. xlii.

¶ Ep. Clem. Rom. c. xvi.

** Pol. Ep. ad Phil. c. v. viii. ii. iii.

†† Ir. ad Flor. ap. Euseb. l. v. c. 20

resurrection, this writer is even circumstantial. He mentions the apostles' eating and drinking with Christ after he had risen, their feeling and their handling him; from which last circumstance Ignatius raises this just reflection: "They believed, being convinced both by his flesh and spirit; for this cause they despised death, and were found to be above it."*

Quadratus, of the same age with Ignatius, has left us the following noble testimony:—"The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous, for they were real; both those that were healed, and those that were raised from the dead; who were seen not only when they were healed or raised, but for a long time afterward; not only whilst he dwelled on this earth, but also after his departure, and for a good while after it, insomuch that some of them have reached to our times."†

Justin Martyr came little more than thirty years after Quadratus. From Justin's works, which are still extant, might be collected a tolerably complete account of Christ's life, in all points agreeing with that which is delivered in our Scriptures; taken, indeed, in a great measure, from those Scriptures, but still proving that this account, and no other, was the account known and extant in that age. The miracles in particular, which form the part of Christ's history, most material to be traced, stand fully and distinctly recognised in the following passage:—"He healed those who had been blind, and deaf, and lame, from their birth; causing, by his word, one to leap, another to hear, and a third to see: and by raising the dead, and making them to live, he induced, by his works, the men of that age to know him."‡

It is unnecessary to carry these citations lower, because the history, after this time, occurs in ancient Christian writings as familiarly as it is wont to do in modern sermons;—occurs always the same in substance, and always that which our Evangelists represent.

This is not only true of those writings of Christians, which are genuine, and of acknowledged authority, but it is, in a great measure, true of *all* their ancient writings which remain; although some of these may have been erroneously ascribed to authors to whom they did not belong, or may contain false accounts, or may appear to be undeserving of credit, or never indeed to have obtained any. Whatever fables they have mixed with the narrative, they preserve the material parts, the leading facts, as we have them; and so far as they do this, although they be evidence of nothing else, they are evidence that these points were *fixed*, were received and acknowledged by all Christians in the ages in which the books were written. At least, it may be asserted, that in the places where we were most likely to meet with such things, if such things had existed, no relics appear of any story substantially different from the present, as the cause or as the pretence of the institution.

Now that the original story, the story delivered by the first preachers of the institution, should have died away so entirely as to have left no record or memorial of its existence, although so many records

* Ad Smyr. c. iii. † Ap. Euseb. H. E. lib. iv. c. 3.
‡ Just. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 288. ed. Thirl.

and memorials of the time and transaction remain; and that another story should have stepped into its place, and gained exclusive possession of the belief of all who professed themselves disciples of the institution, is beyond any example of the corruption of even oral tradition, and still less consistent with the experience of written history; and this improbability, which is very great, is rendered still greater by the reflection, that no such *change* as the oblivion of one story, and the substitution of another, took place in any future period of the Christian era. Christianity hath travelled through dark and turbulent ages; nevertheless, it came out of the cloud and the storm, such in substance, as it entered in. Many additions were made to the primitive history, and these entitled to different degrees of credit; many doctrinal errors also were from time to time grafted into the public creed; but still the original story remained, and remained the same. In all its principal parts, it has been fixed from the beginning.

Thirdly: The religious rites and usages that prevailed amongst the early disciples of Christianity were such as belonged to and sprung out of, the narrative now in our hands; which accordancy shews, that it was the narrative upon which these persons acted, and which they received from their teachers. Our account makes the Founder of the religion direct that his disciples should be baptized: we know that the first Christians were baptized. Our account makes him direct, that they should hold religious assemblies; we find that they did hold religious assemblies. Our accounts make the apostles assemble upon a stated day of the week: we find, and that from information perfectly independent of our accounts, that the Christians of the first century did observe stated days of assembling. Our histories record the institution of the rite which we call the Lord's Supper, and a command to repeat it in perpetual succession: we find amongst the early Christians, the celebration of this rite universal. And, indeed, we find, concurring in all the above-mentioned observances, Christian societies of many different nations and languages, removed from one another by a great distance of place, and dissimilitude of situation. It is also extremely material to remark, that there is no room for insinuating that our books were fabricated with a studious accommodation to the usages which obtained at the time they were written; that the authors of the books found the usages established, and framed the story to account for their original. The Scripture accounts, especially of the Lord's Supper, are too short and cursory, not to say too obscure, and, in this view, deficient, to allow a place for any such suspicion.*

Amongst the proofs of the truth of our proposition, viz. that the story which we have *now* is, in substance, the story which the Christians had *then*, or, in other words, that the accounts in our Gospels are, as to their principal parts, at least, the accounts which the apostles and original teachers of the religion delivered, one arises from observing that it appears by the Gospels themselves, that the story

* The reader who is conversant in these researches, by comparing the short Scripture accounts of the Christian rites above mentioned, with the minute and circumstantial directions contained in the pretended apostolical constitutions, will see the force of this observation; the difference between truth and forgery.

was public at the time; that the Christian community was already in possession of the substance and principal parts of the narrative. The Gospels were not the original cause of the Christian history being believed, but were themselves among the consequences of that belief. This is expressly affirmed by Saint Luke, in his brief, but, as I think, very important and instructive, preface: "Forasmuch (says the evangelist) as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things *which are most surely believed amongst us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word*: it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things *wherein thou hast been instructed.*" This short introduction testifies, that the substance of the history which the evangelist was about to write, was already believed by Christians; that it was believed upon the declarations of eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; that it formed the account of their religion in which Christians were instructed; that the office which the historian proposed to himself, was to trace each particular to its origin, and to fix the certainty of many things which the reader had before heard of. In Saint John's Gospel, the same point appears hence, that there are some principal facts to which the historian refers, but which he does not relate. A remarkable instance of this kind is the *ascension*, which is not mentioned by Saint John in its place, at the conclusion of his history, but which is plainly referred to in the following words of the sixth chapter:*—"What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" and still more positively in the words which Christ, according to our evangelist, spoke to Mary after his resurrection, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; unto my God, and your God."† This can only be accounted for by the supposition that Saint John wrote under a sense of the notoriety of Christ's ascension, amongst those by whom his book was likely to be read. The same account must also be given of Saint Matthew's omission of the same important fact. The thing was very well known, and it did not occur to the historian that it was necessary to add any particulars concerning it. It agrees also with this solution and with no other, that neither Matthew nor John disposes of the person of our Lord in any manner whatever. Other intimations in Saint John's Gospel of the then general notoriety of the story are the following: His manner of introducing his narrative (chap. 1. ver. 15), "John bare witness of him, and cried, saying"—evidently presupposes that his readers knew who John was. His rapid parenthetical reference to John's imprisonment, "for John was not yet cast into prison,"‡ could only come from a writer whose mind was in the habit of considering John's imprisonment as perfectly notorious. The description of Andrew by the addition "Simon Peter's brother,"§ takes it for granted, that Simon Peter was well known. His name had not been mentioned before. The evangelist's noticing‖

* Also John iii. 13, and xvi, 28. † John xx. 17. ‡ John iii. 24.
§ John i. 40. ‖ Ibid, xxi. 24.

the prevailing misconstruction of a discourse which Christ held with the beloved disciple, proves that the characters and the discourse were already public. And the observation which these instances afford, is of equal validity for the purpose of the present argument, whoever were the authors of the histories.

These *four* circumstances;—first, the recognition of the account in its principal parts, by a series of succeeding writers; secondly, the total absence of any account of the origin of the religion substantially different from ours; thirdly, the early and extensive prevalence of rites and institutions which result from our account; fourthly, our account bearing, in its construction, proof that it is an account of facts which were known and believed at the time;—are sufficient, I conceive, to support an assurance, that the story which we have now, is, in general, the story which Christians had at the beginning. I say *in general*; by which term I mean, that it is the same in its texture, and in its principal facts. For instance, I make no doubt, for the reasons above stated, but that the resurrection of the Founder of the religion was always a part of the Christian story. Nor can a doubt of this remain upon the mind of any one who reflects that the resurrection is, in some form or other, asserted, referred to, or assumed, in every Christian writing, of every description, which hath come down to us.

And if our evidence stopped here, we should have a strong case to offer: for we should have to allege, that in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, a certain number of persons set about an attempt of establishing a new religion in the world: in the prosecution of which purpose, they voluntarily encountered great dangers, undertook great labours, sustained great sufferings, *all* for a miraculous story, which they published wherever they came; and that the resurrection of a dead man, whom during his life they had followed and accompanied, was a constant part of this story. I know nothing in the above statement which can, with any appearance of reason, be disputed; and I know nothing, in the history of the human species, similar to it.

CHAPTER VIII.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

THAT the story which we have now is, in the main, the story which the apostles published, is, I think, nearly certain, from the considerations which have been proposed. But whether, when we come to the particulars, and the detail of the narrative, the historical books of the New Testament be deserving of credit as histories, so that a fact ought to be accounted true, because it is found in them; or whether they are entitled to be considered as representing the accounts, which,

true or false, the apostles published;—whether their authority, in either of these views, can be trusted to, is a point which necessarily depends upon what we know of the books, and of their authors.

Now, in treating of this part of our argument, the first and most material observation upon the subject is, that such was the situation of the authors to whom the four Gospels are ascribed, that, if any one of the four be genuine, it is sufficient for our purpose. The received author of the first, was an original apostle and emissary of the religion. The received author of the second was an inhabitant of Jerusalem at the time, to whose house the apostles were wont to resort, and himself an attendant upon one of the most eminent of that number. The received author of the third, was a stated companion and fellow-traveller of the most active of all the teachers of the religion, and, in the course of his travels, frequently in the society of the original apostles. The received author of the fourth, as well as of the first, was one of these apostles. No stronger evidence of the truth of a history can arise from the situation of the historian, than what is here offered. The authors of all the histories lived at the time and upon the spot. The authors of two of the histories were present at many of the scenes which they describe; eye-witnesses of the facts, ear-witnesses of the discourses; writing from personal knowledge and recollection; and, what strengthens their testimony, writing upon a subject in which their minds were deeply engaged, and in which as they must have been very frequently repeating the accounts to others, the passages of the history would be kept continually alive in their memory. Whoever reads the Gospels (and they ought to be read for this particular purpose), will find in them not merely a general affirmation of miraculous powers, but detailed circumstantial accounts of miracles, with specifications of time, place, and persons; and these accounts many and various. In the Gospels, therefore, which bear the names of Matthew and John, these narratives, if they really proceeded from these men, must either be true, as far as the fidelity of human recollection is usually to be depended upon, that is, must be true in substance, and in their principal parts (which is sufficient for the purpose of proving a supernatural agency), or they must be wilful and meditated falsehoods. Yet the writers who fabricated and uttered these falsehoods, if they be such, are of the number of those, who, unless the whole contexture of the Christian story be a dream, sacrificed their ease and safety in the cause and for a purpose the most inconsistent that is possible with dishonest intentions. They were villains for no end but to teach honesty, and martyrs without the least prospect of honour or advantage.

The Gospels which bear the name of Mark and Luke, although not the narratives of eye-witnesses, are, if genuine, removed from that only by one degree. They are the narratives of contemporary writers, of writers themselves mixing with the business; one of the two probably living in the place which was the principal scene of action; both living in habits of society and correspondence with those who had been present at the transactions which they relate. The latter of them accordingly tells us (and with apparent sincerity, because he tells it without pretending to personal knowledge, and without claiming for his work greater authority than belonged to it), tha

the things which were believed amongst Christians, came from those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; that he had traced accounts up to their source; and that he was prepared to instruct his reader in the certainty of the things which he related.* Very few histories lie so close to their facts; very few historians are so nearly connected with the subject of their narrative, or possess such means of authentic information, as these.

The situation of the writers applies to the *truth* of the facts which they record. But at present we use their testimony to a point somewhat short of this, namely, that the facts recorded in the Gospels, whether true or false, are the facts, and the sort of facts which the original preachers of the religion alleged. Strictly speaking, I am concerned only to shew, that what the Gospels contain is the same as what the apostles preached. Now, how stands the proof of this point? A set of men went about the world, publishing a story composed of miraculous accounts (for miraculous from the very nature and exigency of the case they must have been), and, upon the strength of these accounts, called upon mankind to quit the religions in which they had been educated, and to take up, thenceforth, a new system of opinions, and new rules of action. What is more in attestation of these accounts, that is, in support of an institution of which these accounts were the foundation, is, that the same men voluntarily exposed themselves to harassing and perpetual labours, dangers, and sufferings. We want to know what these accounts were. We have the particulars, *i. e.* many particulars, from two of their own number. We have them from an attendant of one of the number, and who, there is reason to believe, was an inhabitant of Jerusalem at the time. We have them from a fourth writer, who accompanied the most laborious missionary of the institution in his travels; who, in the course of these travels, was frequently brought into the society of the rest; and who, let it be observed, begins his narrative by telling us that he is about to relate the things which had been delivered by those who were ministers of the word, and eye-witnesses of the facts. I do not know what information can be more satisfactory than this. We may, perhaps, perceive the force and value of it more sensibly, if we reflect how *requiring* we should have been if we had wanted it. Supposing it to be sufficiently proved, that the religion now professed among us, owed its original to the preaching and ministry of a number of men, who, about eighteen centuries ago, set forth in the world a new system of religious opinions, founded upon certain extraordinary things which they related of a wonderful person who had appeared in Judea; suppose it to be also sufficiently proved, that, in the course and prosecution of their ministry, these men had subjected themselves to extreme hardships, fatigue and peril; but suppose the accounts which they published had not been committed to writing till some ages after their times, or at least that no histories, but what had been composed some ages afterward, had reached our hands; we should

* Why should not the candid and modest preface of this historian be believed, as well as that which Dion Cassius prefixes to his Life of Commodus? "These things and the following I write not from the report of others, but from my own knowledge and observation." I see no reason to doubt but that both passages describe truly enough the situation of the authors.

have said, and with reason, that we were willing to believe these men under the circumstances in which they delivered their testimony, but that we did not, at this day, know with sufficient evidence what their testimony was. Had we received the particulars of it from any of their own number, from any of those who lived and conversed with them, from any of their hearers, or even from any of their contemporaries, we should have had something to rely upon. Now, if our books be genuine, we have all these. We have the very species of information which, as it appears to me, our imagination would have carved out for us, if it had been wanting.

But I have said, that, if *any one* of the four Gospels be genuine, we have not only direct historical testimony to the point we contend for, but testimony which so far as that point is concerned, cannot reasonably be rejected. If the first Gospel was really written by Matthew, we have the narrative of one of the number, from which to judge what were the miracles, and the kind of miracles, which the apostles attributed to Jesus. Although, for argument's sake, and only for argument's sake, we should allow that this Gospel had been erroneously ascribed to Matthew; yet if the Gospel of Saint John be genuine, the observation holds with no less strength. Again, although the Gospels both of Matthew and John could be supposed to be spurious, yet, if the Gospel of Saint Luke were truly the composition of that person, or of any person, be his name what it might, who was actually in the situation in which the author of that Gospel professes himself to have been, or if the Gospel which bears the name of Mark really proceeded from him; we still, even upon the lowest supposition, possess the accounts of one writer at least, who was not only contemporary with the apostles, but associated with them in their ministry; which authority seems sufficient, when the question is simply what it was which these apostles advanced.

I think it material to have this well noticed. The New Testament contains a great number of distinct writings, the genuineness of any one of which is almost sufficient to prove the truth of the religion: it contains, however, four distinct histories, the genuineness of any one of which is perfectly sufficient. If, therefore, we must be considered as encountering the risk of error in assigning the authors of our books, we are entitled to the advantage of so many separate probabilities. And although it should appear that some of the evangelists had seen and used each other's works, this discovery, whilst it substracts indeed from their characters as testimonies strictly independent, diminishes, I conceive, little, either their separate authority (by which I mean the authority of any one that is genuine,) or their mutual confirmation. For, let the most disadvantageous supposition possible be made concerning them; let it be allowed, what I should have no great difficulty in admitting, that Mark compiled his history almost entirely from those of Matthew and Luke; and let it also for a moment be supposed that these histories were not, in fact written by Matthew and Luke; yet, if it be true that Mark, a contemporary of the apostles, living in habits of society with the apostles, a fellow-traveller and fellow-labourer with some of them; if, I say, it be true that this person made the compilation, it follows, that the writings from which he made it, existed in the time of the apostles, and not only so, but

that they were then in such esteem and credit, that a companion of the apostles formed a history out of them. Let the Gospel of Mark be called an epitome of that of Matthew; if a person in the situation in which Mark is described to have been, actually made the epitome, it affords the strongest possible attestation to the character of the original.

Again, parallelisms in sentences, in words, and in the order of words, have been traced out between the Gospel of Matthew and that of Luke; which concurrence cannot easily be explained otherwise than by supposing, either that Luke had consulted Matthew's history, or, what appears to me in no wise incredible, that minutes of some of Christ's discourses, as well as brief memoirs of some passages of his life, had been committed to writing at the time; and that such written accounts had by both authors been occasionally admitted into their histories. Either supposition is perfectly consistent with the acknowledged formation of Saint Luke's narrative, who professes not to write as an eye-witness, but to have investigated the original of every account which he delivers; in other words, to have collected them from such documents and testimonies, as he, who had the best opportunities of making enquiries, judged to be authentic. Therefore, allowing that this writer also, in some instances, borrowed from the Gospel which we call Matthew's, and once more allowing, for the sake of stating the argument, that that Gospel was not the production of the author to whom we ascribe it; yet still we have, in St. Luke's Gospel, a history given by a writer immediately connected with the transaction, with the witnesses of it, with the persons engaged in it, and composed from materials which that person, thus situated, deemed to be safe sources of intelligence; in other words, whatever supposition be made concerning any or all the other Gospels, if Saint Luke's Gospel be genuine, we have *in it* a credible evidence of the point which we maintain.

The Gospel according to Saint John appears to be, and is on all hands allowed to be, an independent testimony, strictly and properly so called. Notwithstanding, therefore, any connexion, or supposed connexion between some of the Gospels, I again repeat what I before said, that if any one of the four be genuine, we have, in that one, strong reason, from the character and situation of the writer, to believe that we possess the accounts which the original emissaries of the religion delivered.

Secondly: In treating of the written evidences of Christianity, next to their separate, we are to consider their aggregate authority. Now, there is in the evangelic history a cumulation of testimony which belongs hardly to any other history, but which our habitual mode of reading the Scriptures sometimes causes us to overlook. When a passage, in any wise relating to the history of Christ, is read to us out of the epistle of Clemens Romanus, the epistles of Ignatius, of Polycarp, or from any other writing of that age, we are immediately sensible of the confirmation which it affords to the Scripture account. Here is a new witness. Now, if we had been accustomed to read the Gospel of Matthew alone, and had known that of Luke only as the generality of Christians know the writings of the apostolical fathers, that is, had known that such a writing was extant and acknowledged;

when we came, for the first time, to look into what it contained, and found many of the facts which Matthew recorded, recorded also there, many other facts of a similar nature added, and throughout the whole work the same general series of transactions stated, and the same general character of the person who was the subject of the history preserved, I apprehend that we should feel our minds strongly impressed by this discovery of fresh evidence. We should feel a renewal of the same sentiment in first reading the Gospel of Saint John. That of Saint Mark perhaps would strike us as an abridgment of the history with which we were already acquainted; but we should naturally reflect, that if that history was abridged by such a person as Mark, or by any person of so early an age, it afforded one of the highest possible attestations to the value of the work. This successive disclosure of proof would leave us assured, that there must have been at least some reality in a story which not one, but many, had taken in hand to commit to writing. The very existence of four separate histories would satisfy us that the subject had a foundation; and when, amidst the variety which the different information of the different writers had supplied to their accounts, or which their different choice and judgment in selecting their materials had produced, we observed many facts to stand the same in all; of these facts, at least, we should conclude, that they were fixed in their credit and publicity. If, after this, we should come to the knowledge of a distinct history, and that also of the same age with the rest, taking up the subject where the others had left it, and carrying on a narrative of the effects produced in the world by the extraordinary causes of which we had already been informed, and which effects subsist at this day, we should think the reality of the original story in no little degree established by this supplement. If subsequent enquiries should bring to our knowledge, one after another, letters written by some of the principal agents in the business, upon the business, and during the time of their activity and concern in it, assuming all along and recognising the original story, agitating the questions that arose out of it, pressing the obligations which resulted from it, giving advice and directions to those who acted upon it; I conceive that we should find, in every one of these, a still farther support to the conclusion we had formed. At present, the weight of this successive confirmation is, in a great measure, unperceived by us. The evidence does not appear to us what it is; for, being from our infancy accustomed to regard the New Testament as one book, we see in it only one testimony. The whole occurs to us as a single evidence; and its different parts, not as distinct attestations, but as different portions only of the same. Yet in this conception of the subject, we are certainly mistaken; for the very discrepancies among the several documents which form our volume, prove, if all other proof were wanting, that in their original composition they were separate, and most of them independent productions.

If we dispose our ideas in a different order, the matter stands thus: Whilst the transaction was recent, and the original witnesses were at hand to relate it; and whilst the apostles were busied in preaching and travelling, in collecting disciples, in forming and regulating societies of converts, in supporting themselves against opposition; whilst they exercised their ministry under the harrassings of frequent persecution,

and in a state of almost continual alarm, it is not probable that, in this engaged, anxious, and unsettled condition of life, they would think immediately of writing histories for the information of the public or of posterity.* But it is very probable, that emergencies might draw from some of them occasional letters upon the subject of their mission, to converts, or to societies of converts, with which they were connected; or that they might address written discourses and exhortations to the disciples of the institution at large, which would be received and read with a respect proportioned to the character of the writer. Accounts in the meantime would get abroad of the extraordinary things that had been passing, written with different degrees of information and correctness. The extension of the Christian society, which could no longer be instructed by a personal intercourse with the apostles, and the possible circulation of imperfect or erroneous narratives, would soon teach some amongst them the expediency of sending forth authentic memoirs of the life and doctrine of their Master. When accounts appeared authorized by the name, and credit, and situation, of the writers, recommended or recognized by the apostles and first preachers of the religion, or found to coincide with what the apostles and first preachers of the religion had taught, other accounts would fall into disuse and neglect; whilst these, maintaining their reputation (as, if, genuine and well founded, they would do) under the test of time, inquiry, and contradiction, might be expected to make their way into the hands of Christians of all countries of the world.

This seems the natural progress of the business; and with this the records in our possession, and the evidence concerning them, correspond. We have remaining, in the first place, many letters of the kind above described, which have been preserved with a care and fidelity answering to the respect with which we may suppose that such letters would be received. But as these letters were not written to prove the truth of the Christian religion, in the sense in which we regard that question; nor to convey information of facts, of which those to whom the letters were written had been previously informed; we are not to look in them for any thing more than incidental allusions to the Christian history. We are able, however, to gather from these documents various particular attestations which have been already enumerated; and this is a species of written evidence, as far as it goes, in the highest degree satisfactory, and in point of time perhaps the first. But for our more circumstantial information, we have, in the next place, five direct *histories*, bearing the names of persons acquainted, by their situation, with the truth of what they relate, and three of them purporting, in the very body of the narrative, to be written by such persons; of which books we know, that some were in the hands of those who were contemporaries of the apostles, and that, in the age immediately posterior to that, they were in the hands, we may say, of every one, and received by Christians with so much respect and deference, as to be constantly quoted and referred to by

* This thought occurred to Eusebius: "Nor were the apostles of Christ greatly concerned about the writing of books, being engaged in a more excellent ministry, which is above all human power." Eccles. Hist. l. iii. c. 24.—The same consideration accounts also for the paucity of Christian writings in the first century of its era.

them, without any doubt of the truth of their accounts. They were treated as such histories, proceeding from such authorities, might expect to be treated. In the preface to one of our histories, we have intimations left us of the existence of some ancient accounts which are now lost. There is nothing in this circumstance that can surprise us. It was to be expected, from the magnitude and novelty of the occasion, that such accounts would swarm. When better accounts came forth, these died away. Our present histories superseded others. They soon acquired a character and established a reputation which does not appear to have belonged to any other: that, at least, can be proved concerning them, which cannot be proved concerning any other.

But to return to the point which led to these reflections. By considering our records in either of the two views in which we have represented them, we shall perceive that we possess a *collection of proofs*, and not a naked or solitary testimony; and that the written evidence is of such a kind, and comes to us in such a state, as the natural order and progress of things, in the infancy of the institution, might be expected to produce.

Thirdly; The genuineness of the historical books of the New Testament is undoubtedly a point of importance, because the strength of their evidence is augmented by our knowledge of the situation of their authors, their relation to the subject, and the part which they sustained in the transaction; and the testimonies which we are able to produce, compose a firm ground of persuasion, that the Gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear. Nevertheless, I must be allowed to state, that to the argument which I am endeavouring to maintain, this point is not essential; I mean, so essential as that the fate of the argument depends upon it. The question before us is, whether the Gospels exhibit the story which the apostles and first emissaries of the religion published, and *for* which they acted and suffered in the manner in which, for some miraculous story or other, they did act and suffer. Now let us suppose that we possessed no other information concerning these books than that they were written by early disciples of Christianity; that they were known and read during the time, or near the time, of the original apostles of the religion; that by Christians whom the apostles instructed, by societies of Christians which the apostles founded, these books were *received* (by which term "received," I mean that they were believed to contain authentic accounts of the transactions upon which the religion rested, and accounts which were accordingly used, repeated, and relied upon); this reception would be a valid proof that these books, whoever were the authors of them, must have accorded with what the apostles taught. A reception by the first race of Christians, is evidence that they agreed with what the first teachers of the religion delivered. In particular, if they had not agreed with what the apostles themselves preached, how could they have gained credit in churches and societies which the apostles established.

Now the fact of their early existence, and not only of their existence but their reputation, is made out by some ancient testimonies which do not happen to specify the names of the writers: add to which, what hath been already hinted, that two out of the four Gospels con-

tain averments in the body of the history, which, though they do not disclose the names, fix the time and situation of the authors, viz. that one was written by an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ, the other by a contemporary of the apostles. In the Gospel of Saint John, (xix. 35.) after describing the crucifixion, with the particular circumstance of piercing Christ's side with a spear, the historian adds, as for himself, "and he that saw it bear record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." Again, (xxi. 24.) after relating a conversation which passed between Peter and "the disciple," as it is there expressed, "whom Jesus loved," it is added, "this is the disciple which testified of these things, and wrote these things." This testimony, let it be remarked, is not less worthy of regard, because it is, in one view, imperfect. The name is not mentioned; which, if a fraudulent purpose had been intended, would have been done. The third of our present Gospels purports to have been written by the person who wrote the Acts of the Apostles; in which latter history, or rather latter part of the same history, the author, by using in various places the first person plural, declares himself to have been a contemporary of all, and a companion of one, of the original preachers of the religion.

CHAPTER IX.

There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.

OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

NOT forgetting, therefore, what credit is due to the evangelical history, supposing even any one of the four Gospels to be genuine; what credit is due to the Gospels, even supposing nothing to be known concerning them but that they were written by early disciples of the religion, and received with deference by early Christian churches; more especially not forgetting what credit is due to the New Testament in its capacity of *cumulative* evidence; we now proceed to state the proper and distinct proofs, which shew not only the general value of these records, but their specific authority, and the high probability which there is that they actually came from persons whose names they bear.

There are however, a few preliminary reflections, by which we may draw up with more regularity to the propositions upon which the close and particular discussion of the subject depends. Of which nature are the following:

I. We are able to produce a great number of ancient *manuscripts*, found in many different countries, and in countries widely distant from each other, all of them anterior to the art of printing, some certainly

seven or eight hundred years old, and some which have been preserved probably above a thousand years.* We have also many ancient *versions* of these books, and some of them into languages which are not at present, nor for many ages have been, spoken in any part of the world. The existence of these manuscripts and versions proves that the Scriptures were not the production of any modern contrivance. It does away also the uncertainty which hangs over such publications as the works, real or pretended, of Ossian and Rowley, in which the editors are challenged to produce their manuscripts, and to shew where they obtained their copies. The number of manuscripts, far exceeding those of any other book, and their wide dispersion, afford an argument, in some measure to the senses, that the Scriptures anciently, in like manner as at this day, were more read and sought after than any other books, and that also in many different countries. The greatest part of spurious Christian writings are utterly lost, the rest preserved by some single manuscript. There is weight also in Dr. Bentley's observation, that the New Testament has suffered less injury by the errors of transcribers, than the works of any profane author of the same size and antiquity; that is, there never was any writing, in the preservation and purity of which the world was so interested or so careful.

II. An argument of great weight with those who are judges of the proofs upon which it is founded, and capable, through their testimony, of being addressed to every understanding, is that which arises from the style and language of the New Testament. It is just such a language as might be expected from the apostles, from persons of their age and in their situation, and from no other persons. It is the style neither of classic authors, nor of the ancient Christian fathers, but Greek coming from men of Hebrew origin; abounding, that is, with Hebraic and Syriac idioms, such as would naturally be found in the writings of men who used a language spoken indeed where they lived, but not the common dialect of the country. This happy peculiarity is a strong proof of the genuineness of these writings: for who should forge them? The Christian fathers were for the most part totally ignorant of Hebrew, and therefore were not likely to insert Hebraisms and Syriasms into their writings. The few who had a knowledge of the Hebrew, as Justin Martyr, Origen, and Epiphanius, wrote in a language which bears no resemblance to that of the New Testament. The Nazarenes, who understood Hebrew, used chiefly, perhaps almost entirely, the Gospel of Saint Matthew, and therefore cannot be suspected of forging the rest of the sacred writings. The argument, at any rate, proves the antiquity of these books; that they belonged to the age of the apostles; that they could be composed indeed in no other.†

III. Why should we question the genuineness of these books? Is it for that they contain accounts of supernatural events? I apprehend that this, at the bottom, is the real, though secret, cause of our hesitation about them; for, had the writings inscribed with the names of

* The Alexandrian manuscript, now in the British Museum, was written probably in the fourth or fifth century.

† See this argument stated more at large in Michaelis's Introduction (Marsh's translation), vol. i. c. ii. sect. 10. from which these observations are taken.

Matthew and John, related nothing but ordinary history, there would have been no more doubt whether these writings were theirs, than there is concerning the acknowledged works of Josephus or Philo; that is, there would have been no doubt at all. Now it ought to be considered that this reason, however it may apply to the credit which is given to a writer's judgment or veracity, affects the question of genuineness very indirectly. The works of Bede exhibit many wonderful relations: but who, for that reason, doubts that they were written by Bede? The same of a multitude of other authors. To which may be added, that we ask no more for our books than what we allow to other books in some sort similar to ours: we do not deny the genuineness of the Koran; we admit that the history of Apollonius Tyanæus, purporting to be written by Philostratus, was really written by Philostratus.

IV. If it had been an easy thing in the early times of the institution to have forged Christian writings, and to have obtained currency and reception to the forgeries, we should have had many appearing in the name of Christ himself. No writings would have been received with so much avidity and respect as these: consequently none afforded so great temptation to forgery. Yet we have heard but of one attempt of this sort, deserving of the smallest notice, *that* in a piece of a very few lines, and so far from succeeding, I mean, from obtaining acceptance and reputation, or an acceptance or reputation in any wise similar to that which can be proved to have attended the books of the New Testament, that it is not so much as mentioned by any writer of the three first centuries. The learned reader need not be informed that I mean the Epistle of Christ to Abgarus, king of Edessa, found at present in the work of Eusebius*, as a piece acknowledged by him, though not without considerable doubt whether the whole passage be not an interpolation, as it is most certain, that, after the publication of Eusebius's work, this epistle was universally rejected.†

V. If the ascription of the Gospels to their respective authors had been arbitrary or conjectural, they would have been ascribed to more eminent men. This observation holds concerning the first three Gospels, the reputed authors of which were enabled, by their situation, to obtain true intelligence, and were likely to deliver an honest account of what they knew, but were persons not distinguished in the history by extraordinary marks of notice or commendation. Of the apostles, I hardly know any one of them of whom less is said than Matthew, or of whom the little that is said, is less calculated to magnify his character. Of Mark nothing is said in the Gospels; and what is said of any person of that name in the Acts, and in the Epistles, in no part

* Hist. Eccl. lib. i. c. 15.

† Augustin, A.D. 195, (De Consens. Evang. c. 24.) nad *heard* that the Pagans pretended to be possessed of an epistle from Christ to Peter and Paul: but he had never seen it, and appears to doubt of the existence of any such piece, either genuine or spurious. No other ancient writer mentions it. He also, and he alone, notices, and that in order to condemn it, an epistle ascribed to Christ by the Manichees, A. D. 270, and a short hymn attributed to him by the Priscillianists, A. D. 371. (cont. Faust. Man. lib. xxviii. c. 4.) The lateness of the writer who notices these things, the manner in which he notices them, and, above all, the silence of every preceding writer, render them unworthy of consideration.

bestows praise or eminence upon him. The name of Luke is mentioned only in Saint Paul's Epistles,* and that very transiently. The judgment, therefore, which assigned these writings to these authors proceeded, it may be presumed, upon proper knowledge and evidence, and not upon a voluntary choice of names.

VI. Christian writers and Christian churches appear to have soon arrived at a very general agreement upon the subject, and that without the interposition of any public authority. When the diversity of opinion, which prevailed, and prevails among Christians in other points, is considered, their concurrence in the canon of Scripture is remarkable, and of great weight, especially as it seems to have been the result of private and free inquiry. We have no knowledge of any interference of authority in the question, before the council of Laodicea in the year 363. Probably the decree of this council rather declared than regulated the public judgment, or, more properly speaking, the judgment of some neighbouring churches; the council itself consisting of no more than thirty or forty bishops of Lydia and the adjoining countries.† Nor does its authority seem to have extended farther; for we find numerous Christian writers, after this time, discussing the question, "What books were entitled to be received as Scripture," with great freedom, upon proper grounds of evidence, and without any reference to the decision at Laodicea.

These considerations are not to be neglected: but of an argument concerning the genuineness of ancient writings, the substance, undoubtedly, and strength, is ancient testimony.

This testimony it is necessary to exhibit somewhat in detail: for when Christian advocates merely tell us, that we have the same reason for believing the Gospels to be written by the evangelists whose names they bear, as we have for believing the Commentaries to be Cæsar's, the Æneid Virgil's, or the Orations Cicero's, they content themselves with an imperfect representation. They state nothing more than what is true, but they do not state the truth correctly. In the number, variety, and early date, of our testimonies, we far exceed all other ancient books. For one, which the most celebrated work of the most celebrated Greek or Roman writer can allege, we produce many. But then it is more requisite in our books, than in theirs, to separate and distinguish them from spurious competitors. The result, I am convinced, will be satisfactory to every fair inquirer: but this circumstance renders an inquiry necessary.

In a work, however, like the present, there is a difficulty in finding a place for evidence of this kind. To pursue the details of proofs throughout, would be to transcribe a great part of Dr. Lardner's eleven octavo volumes: to leave the argument without proofs, is to leave it without effect; for the persuasion produced by this species of evidence depends upon a view and induction of the particulars which compose it.

The method which I propose to myself is, first, to place before the reader, in one view, the propositions which comprise the several heads of our testimony, and afterward to repeat the same propositions in so

* Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. 24.
† Lardner, Cred. vol. viii. p. 291, &c.

many distinct sections, with the necessary authorities subjoined to each.*

The following then, are the allegations upon the subject, which are capable of being established by proof:—

I. That the historical books of the New Testament, meaning thereby the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are quoted, or alluded to, by a series of Christian writers, beginning with those who were contemporary with the apostles, or who immediately followed them, and proceeding in close and regular succession from their time to the present.

II. That when they are quoted, or alluded to, they are quoted or alluded to with peculiar respect, as books *sui generis*; as possessing an authority which belonged to no other books, and as conclusive in all questions and controversies amongst Christians.

III. That they were, in very early times, collected into a distinct volume.

IV. That they were distinguished by appropriate names and titles of respect.

V. That they were publicly read and expounded in the religious assemblies of the early Christians.

VI. That commentaries were written upon them, harmonies formed out of them, different copies carefully collated, and versions of them made into different languages.

VII. That they were received by Christians of different sects, by many heretics as well as catholics, and usually appealed to by both sides in the controversies which arose in those days.

VIII. That the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of Saint Paul, the first Epistle of John, and the first of Peter, were received, without doubt, by those who doubted concerning the other books which are included in our present canon.

IX. That the Gospels were attacked by the early adversaries of Christianity, as books containing the accounts upon which the religion was founded.

X. That formal catalogues of authentic Scriptures were published; in all which our present sacred histories were included.

XI. That these propositions cannot be affirmed of any other books claiming to be books of Scripture; by which are meant those books which are commonly called apocryphal books of the New Testament.

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* The reader, when he has the propositions before him, will observe that the argument, if he should omit the sections, proceeds connectedly from this point.

SECT. I.

The historical books of the New Testament, meaning thereby the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are quoted, or alluded to, by a series of Christian writers, beginning with those who were contemporary with the apostles, or who immediately followed them, and proceeding in close and regular succession from their time to the present.

THE medium of proof stated in this proposition is, of all others, the most unquestionable, the least liable to any practices of fraud, and is not diminished by the lapse of ages. Bishop Burnet, in the History of his Own Times, inserts various extracts from lord Clarendon's History. One such insertion is a proof, that lord Clarendon's History was extant at the time when bishop Burnet wrote, that it had been read by bishop Burnet, that it was received by bishop Burnet as a work of lord Clarendon, and also regarded by him as an authentic account of the transactions which it relates; and it will be a proof of these points a thousand years hence, or as long as the books exist. Quintilian having quoted as Cicero's,* that well-known trait of dissembled vanity,—

"Si quid est in me ingenii, Judices, quod sentio quam sit exiguum;"—

the quotation would be strong evidence, were there any doubt, that the oration, which opens with this address, actually came from Cicero's pen. These instances, however simple, may serve to point out to a reader, who is little accustomed to such researches, the nature and value of the argument.

The testimonies which we have to bring forward under this proposition are the following:

1. There is extant an epistle ascribed to Barnabas,† the companion of Paul. It is quoted as the epistle of Barnabas, by Clement of Alexandria, A. D. CXCIV; by Origen, A. D. CCXXX. It is mentioned by Eusebius, A. D. CCCIV, and by Jerome, A. D. CCCXCII, as an ancient work in their time, bearing the name of Barnabas, and as well known and read amongst Christians, though not accounted a part of Scripture. It purports to have been written soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, during the calamities which followed that disaster; and it bears the character of the age to which it professes to belong.

In this epistle appears the following remarkable passage:—"Let us, therefore, beware lest it come upon us, *as it is written*; There are many called, few chosen." From the expression, "as it is written," we infer with certainty, that, at the time when the author of this epistle lived, there was a book extant, well known to Christians, and of authority amongst them, containing these words:—"Many are called, few chosen." Such a book is our present Gospel of Saint

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* Quint. lib. xi. c. i.

† Lardner, Cred. edit. 1755, vol. i. p. 23, &c. The reader will observe from the references, that the materials of these sections are almost entirely extracted from Dr. Lardner's work; my office consisted in arrangement and selection

Matthew, in which this text is twice found,* and is found in no other book now known. There is a farther observation to be made upon the terms of the quotation. The writer of the epistle was a Jew. The phrase "it is written," was the very form in which the Jews quoted their Scriptures. It is not probable, therefore, that he would have used this phrase, and without qualification, of any books but what had acquired a kind of scriptural authority. If the passage remarked in this ancient writing had been found in one of Saint Paul's Epistles, it would have been esteemed by every one a high testimony to Saint Matthew's Gospel. It ought, therefore, to be remembered, that the writing in which it is found was probably by very few years posterior to those of Saint Paul.

Beside this passage, there are also in the epistle before us several others, in which the sentiment is the same with what we meet with in Saint Matthew's Gospel, and two or three in which we recognise the same words. In particular, the author of the epistle repeats the precept, "Give to every one that asketh thee;"† and saith that Christ chose as his apostles, who were to preach the gospel, men who were great sinners, that he might shew that he came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."‡

II. We are in possession of an epistle written by Clement, bishop of Rome,§ whom ancient writers, without any doubt or scruple, assert to have been the Clement whom Saint Paul mentions, Phil. iv. 3.; "with *Clement* also, and other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life." This epistle is spoken of by the ancients as an epistle acknowledged by all; and, as Irenæus well represents its value, "written by Clement, who had seen the blessed apostles, and conversed with them; who had the preaching of the apostles still sounding in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes." It is addressed to the church of Corinth; and what alone may seem almost decisive of its authenticity, Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, about the year 170, *i. e.* about eighty or ninety years after the epistle was written, bears witness, "that it had been wont to be read in that church from ancient times."

This epistle affords, amongst others, the following valuable passages:—"Especially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which he spake, teaching gentleness and long suffering: for thus he said:‖ 'Be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven unto you; as you do, so shall it be done unto you; as you give, so shall it be given unto you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye shew kindness, so shall kindness be shewn unto you; with what measure ye mete, with the same shall it be measured to you.' By this command, and by these rules, let us establish ourselves, that we may always walk obediently to his holy words."

Again; "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, for he said, 'Wo to that man by whom offences come; it were better for him that

* Matt. xx. 16. xxii. 14. † Matt. v. 42. ‡ Matt. ix. 13.

§ Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 62, &c.

‖ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Matt. v. 7.—"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you." Luke vi. 37, 38.—"Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matt. vii. 1, 2.

he had not been born, than that he should offend one of my elect; it were better for him that a millstone should be tied about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones."*

In both these passages, we perceive the high respect paid to the words of Christ as recorded by the evangelists; "*Remember* the words of the Lord Jesus;—by this command, and by these rules, let us establish ourselves, that we may always walk obediently to his holy words." We perceive also in Clement a total unconsciousness of doubt, whether these were the real words of Christ, which are read as such in the Gospels. This observation indeed belongs to the whole series of testimony, and especially to the most ancient part of it. Whenever any thing now read in the Gospels is met with in an early Christian writing, it is always observed to stand there as acknowledged truth, *i. e.* to be introduced without hesitation, doubt, or apology. It is to be observed also, that as this epistle was written in the name of the church of Rome, and addressed to the church of Corinth, it ought to be taken as exhibiting the judgment not only of Clement, who drew up the letter, but of these churches themselves, at least as to the authority of the books referred to.

It may be said, that, as Clement has not used words of quotation, it is not certain that he refers to any book whatever. The words of Christ, which he has put down, he might himself have heard from the apostles, or might have received through the ordinary medium of oral tradition. This has been said: but that no such inference can be drawn from the absence of words of quotation, is proved by the three following considerations:—First, that Clement, in the very same manner, namely, without any mark of reference, uses a passage now found in the Epistle to the Romans;† which passage, from the peculiarity of the words which compose it, and from their order, it is manifest that he must have taken from the book. The same remark may be repeated of some very singular sentiments in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Secondly, that there are many sentences of Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians standing in Clement's epistle without any sign of quotation, which yet certainly are quotations; because it appears that Clement had saint Paul's epistle before him, inasmuch as in one place he mentions it in terms too express to leave us in any doubt:—"Take into your hands the epistle of the blessed apostle Paul." Thirdly, that this method of adopting words of Scripture without reference or acknowledgment, was, as will appear in the sequel, a method in general use amongst the most ancient Christian writers.—These analogies not only repel the objection, but cast the presumption on the other side, and afford a considerable degree of positive proof, that the words in question have been borrowed from the places of Scripture in which we now find them.

But take it if you will the other way, that Clement had heard these

* Matt. xviii. 6. "But whoso shall offend one of those little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were cast into the sea." The latter part of the passage in Clement agrees more exactly with Luke xvii. 2: "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

† Romans i. 29.

words from the apostles or first teachers of Christianity; with respect to the precise point of our argument, *viz.* that the Scriptures contain what the apostles taught, this supposition may serve almost as well.

III. Near the conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans, Saint Paul, amongst others, sends the following salutation: "Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, *Hermas*, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them."

Of Hermas, who appears in this catalogue of Roman Christians as contemporary with Saint Paul, a book bearing the name, and it is most probable rightly, is still remaining. It is called the Shepherd* or Pastor of Hermas. Its antiquity is incontestable, from the quotations of it in Irenæus, A. D. 178; Clement of Alexandria, A. D. 194; Tertullian, A. D. 200; Origen, A. D. 230. The notes of the time extant in the epistle itself, agree with its title, and with the testimonies concerning it, for it purports to have been written during the lifetime of Clement.

In this piece are tacit allusions to Saint Matthew's, Saint Luke's, and Saint John's Gospels: that is to say, there are applications of thoughts and expressions found in these Gospels, without citing the place or writer from which they were taken. In this form appear in Hermas the confessing and denying of Christ;† the parable of the seed sown;‡ the comparisons of Christ's disciples to little children; the saying, "He that putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery;"§ the singular expression, "having received all power from his Father," in probable allusion to Matt. xxviii. 18.; and Christ being the "gate," or only way of coming "to God," in plain allusion to John xiv. 6.; x. 7. 9. There is also a probable allusion to Acts v. 32.

This piece is the representation of a vision, and has by many been accounted a weak and fanciful performance. I therefore observe, that the character of the writing has little to do with the purpose for which we adduce it. It is the age in which it was composed that gives the value to its testimony.

IV. Ignatius, as it is testified by ancient Christian writers, became bishop of Antioch about thirty-seven years after Christ's ascension; and therefore, from his time, and place, and station, it is probable that he had known and conversed with many of the apostles. Epistles of Ignatius are referred to by Polycarp, his contemporary. Passages found in the epistles now extant under his name, are quoted by Irenæus, A. D. 178; by Origen, A. D. 230: and the occasion of writing the epistles is given at large by Eusebius and Jerome. What are called the smaller epistles of Ignatius, are generally deemed to be those which were read by Irenæus, Origen, and Eusebius.‖

In these epistles are various undoubted allusions to the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint John; yet so far of the same form with those in the preceding articles, that, like them, they are not accompanied with marks of quotation.

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* Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 111.
† Matt. x. 32, 33. or, Luke xii. 8. 9.
‡ Matt. xiii. 3. or, Luke viii. 5.
§ Luke xvi. 18.
‖ Lardner, Cred. vol i. p. 147.

Of these allusions the following are clear specimens:

Matt.* { "Christ was baptized of John, that *all righteousness might be fulfilled by him.*"
"*Be ye wise as serpents* in all things, and *harmless as a dove.*"

John.† { "Yet the Spirit is not deceived, being from God: for it knows *whence it comes, and whither it goes.*"
"He (Christ) is the *door* of the Father, by which *enter in* Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Apostles, and the church."

As to the manner of quotation, this is observable:—Ignatius, in one place, speaks of Saint Paul in terms of high respect, and quotes his Epistle to the Ephesians by *name;* yet in several other places, he borrows words and sentiments from the same epistle without mentioning it; which shews, that this was his general manner of using and applying writings then extant, and then of high authority.

V. Polycarp‡ had been taught by the apostles; had conversed with many who had seen Christ; was also by the apostles appointed bishop of Smyrna. This testimony concerning Polycarp is given by Irenæus, who in his youth had seen him:—"I can tell the place (saith Irenæus) in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his person, and the discourses he made to the people, and how he related his conversation with John, and others who had seen the Lord, and how he related their sayings, and what he had heard concerning the Lord, both concerning his miracles and his doctrine, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the Word of life; all which Polycarp related agreeable to the Scriptures."

Of Polycarp, whose proximity to the age and country and persons of the apostles is thus attested, we have one undoubted epistle remaining. And this, though a short letter, contains nearly forty clear allusions to books of the New Testament; which is strong evidence of the respect which Christians of that age bore for these books.

Among these, although the writings of Saint Paul are more frequently used by Polycarp than any other parts of Scripture, there are copious allusions to the Gospel of Saint Matthew, some to passages found in the Gospels both of Matthew and Luke, and some which more nearly resemble the words in Luke.

I select the following, as fixing the authority of the Lord's prayer, and the use of it amongst the primitive Christians: "If, therefore, we *pray* the Lord, that *he will forgive us, we ought also to forgive.*"

"With supplication *beseeching* the all-seeing God *not to lead us into temptation.*"

And the following, for the sake of repeating an observation already

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* Chap. iii. 15. "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."
Chap. x. 16. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

† Chap. iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell *whence it cometh and whither it goeth;* so is every one that is born of the Spirit."
Chap. x. 9. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

‡ Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 192.

made, that words of our Lord's, found in our Gospels, were at this early day quoted as spoken by him; and not only so, but quoted with so little question or consciousness of doubt about their being really his words, as not even to mention, much less to canvas, the authority from which they were taken:

"But remembering what the Lord said, teaching, Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."*

Supposing that Polycarp had these words from the books in which we now find them, it is manifest that these books were considered by him, and, as he thought, considered by his readers, as authentic accounts of Christ's discourses; and that that point was incontestable.

The following is a decisive, though what we call a tacit, reference to Saint Peter's speech in the Acts of the Apostles:—"whom God hath raised having loosed the pains of death."†

VI. Papias,‡ a hearer of John, and companion of Polycarp, as Irenæus attests, and of that age, as all agree, in a passage quoted by Eusebius, from a work now lost, expressly ascribes the respective Gospels to Matthew and Mark; and in a manner which proves these Gospels must have publicly borne the names of these authors at that time, and probably long before; for Papias does not say that one Gospel was written by Matthew, and another by Mark; but assuming this as perfectly well known, he tells us from what materials Mark collected his account, *viz.* from Peter's preaching, and in what language Matthew wrote, *viz.* in Hebrew. Whether Papias was well informed in this statement, or not; to the point for which I produce this testimony, namely, that these books bore these names at this time, his authority is complete.

The writers hitherto alleged, had all lived and conversed with some of the Apostles. The works of theirs which remain, are in general very short pieces, yet rendered extremely valuable by their antiquity; and none, short as they are, but contain some important testimony to our historical Scriptures.§

VII. Not long after these, that is not much more than twenty years after the last, follows Justin Martyr.‖ His remaining works are much larger than any that have yet been noticed. Although the nature of his two principal writings, one of which was addressed to heathens, and the other was a conference with a Jew, did not lead him to such frequent appeals to Christian books, as would have appeared in a discourse intended for Christian readers; we nevertheless reckon up in

* Matt. vii. 1, 2, v. 7; Luke vi. 37, 38. † Acts ii. 24.

‡ Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 239.

§ That the quotations are more thinly strown in these, than in the writings of the next and of succeeding ages, is in a good measure accounted for by the observation, that the scriptures of the New Testament had not *yet*, nor by their recency hardly could have, become a general part of Christian education; read as the Old Testament was by the Jews and Christians from their childhood, and thereby intimately mixing, as that had long done, with all their religious ideas, and with their language upon religious subjects. In process of time, and as soon perhaps as could be expected, this came to be the case. And then we perceive the effect, in a proportionably greater frequency, as well as copiousness, of allusion.*

‖ Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 258.

* Mich. Introd. c. ii. sect. vi.

them between twenty and thirty quotations from the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, certain, distinct, and copious: if each verse be counted separately, a much greater number; if each expression, a very great one.*

We meet with quotations of three of the Gospels, within the compass of half a page: "And in other words he says, Depart from me into outer darkness, which the Father hath prepared for Satan and his angels," (which is from Matthew xxv. 41.) "And again he said in other words, I give unto you power to tread upon serpents, and scorpions, and venomous beasts, and upon all the power of the enemy." (This from Luke x. 19.) "And before he was crucified, he said, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Scribes and Pharisees, and be crucified, and rise again the third day." (This from Mark viii. 31.)

In another place, Justin quotes a passage in the history of Christ's birth, as delivered by Matthew and John, and fortifies his quotation by this remarkable testimony: "As they have taught who have written the history of all things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ: and we believe them."

Quotations are also found from the Gospel of Saint John.

What, moreover, seems extremely material to be observed is, that in all Justin's works, from which might be extracted almost a complete life of Christ, there are but two instances, in which he refers to any thing as said or done by Christ, which is not related concerning him in our present Gospels: which shews, that these Gospels, and these, we may say, alone, were the authorities from which the Christians of that day drew the information upon which they depended. One of these instances is of a saying of Christ, not met with in any book now extant.† The other, of a circumstance in Christ's baptism, namely, a fiery or luminous appearance upon the water, which according to Epiphanius, is noticed in the Gospel of the Hebrews; and which might be true: but which, whether true or false, is mentioned by Justin, with a plain mark of diminution when compared with what he quotes as resting upon Scripture authority. The reader will advert to this distinction: "And then, when Jesus came to the river Jordan, where John was baptizing, as Jesus descended into the water, a fire also was kindled in Jordan; and when he came up out of the water,

* "He cites our present canon, and particularly our four Gospels, continually, I dare say, above two hundred times." Jones's New and Full Method. Append. vol. i. p. 589. ed. 1726.

† "Wherefore also our Lord Jesus Christ has said, In whatsoever I shall find you, in the same I will also judge you." Possibly Justin designed not to quote any text, but to represent the sense of many of our Lord's sayings. Fabricius has observed, that this saying has been quoted by many writers, and that Justin is the only one that ascribes it to our Lord, and that perhaps by slip of his memory.

Words resembling these are read repeatedly in Ezekiel; "I will judge them according to their ways;" (chap. vii. 3. xxxiii. 20.) It is remarkable that Justin had just before expressly quoted Ezekiel. Mr. Jones upon this circumstance founded a conjecture, that Justin wrote only "the Lord hath said," intending to quote the words of God, or rather the sense of those words in Ezekiel; and that some transcriber, imagining these words to be the words of Christ, inserted in his copy the addition "Jesus Christ." Vol. i. p. 539.

† Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 314.

the apostles of this our Christ have written, that the Holy Ghost lighted upon him as a dove."

All the references in Justin are made without mentioning the author; which prove that these books were perfectly notorious, and that there were no other accounts of Christ then extant, or, at least, no others so received and credited, as to make it necessary to distinguish these from the rest.

But although Justin mentions not the author's name, he calls the books, "Memoirs composed by the Apostles;" "Memoirs composed by the Apostles and their Companions;" which descriptions, the latter especially, exactly suit with the titles which the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles now bear.

VIII. Hegesippus* came about thirty years after Justin. His testimony is remarkable only for this particular; that he relates of himself, that travelling from Palestine to Rome, he visited, on his journey, many bishops; and that "in every succession, and in every city, the same doctrine is taught, which the Law, and the Prophets, and the *Lord* teacheth." This is an important attestation, from good authority, and of high antiquity. It is generally understood that by the word "Lord," Hegesippus intended some writing or writings, containing the teaching of Christ, in which sense alone the term combines with the other terms "Law and Prophets," which denote writings; and, together with them admit the verb "teacheth" in the present tense. Then, that these writings were some or all of the books of the New Testament, is rendered probable from hence, that in the fragments of his works, which are preserved in Eusebius, and in a writer of the ninth century, enough, though it be little, is left to shew, that Hegesippus expressed divers things in the style of the Gospels, and of the Acts of the Apostles; that he referred to the history in the second chapter of Matthew, and recited a text of that Gospel as spoken by our Lord.

IX. At this time, viz. about the year 170, the churches of Lyons and Vienne, in France, sent a relation of the sufferings of their martyrs to the churches of Asia and Phrygia.† The epistle is preserved entire by Eusebius. And what carries in some measure the testimony of these churches to a higher age, is, that they had now for their bishop, Pothinus, who was ninety years old, and whose early life consequently must have immediately joined on with the times of the apostles. In this epistle are exact references to the Gospels of Luke and John, and to the Acts of the Apostles; the form of reference the same as in all the preceding articles. That from Saint John is in these words: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the Lord, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service."‡

X. The evidence now opens upon us full and clear. Irenæus§ succeded Pothinus as bishop of Lyons. In his youth he had been a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John. In the time in which he lived, he was distant not much more than a century from the publication of the Gospels; in his instruction, only by one step separated from the persons of the apostles. He asserts of himself and his contemporaries, that they were able to reckon up, in all the principal

* Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 314. † Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 332.
‡ John xvi. 2. § Lardner, vol. i. p. 344.

churches, the succession of bishops from the first.* I remark these particulars concerning Irenæus with more formality than usual; because the testimony which this writer affords to the historical books of the New Testament, to their authority, and to the titles which they bear, is express, positive, and exclusive. One principal passage, in which this testimony is contained, opens with a precise assertion of the point which we have laid down as the foundation of our argument, viz. that the story which the Gospels exhibit, is the story which the apostles told. "We have not received," saith Irenæus, "the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those by whom the gospel has been brought to us. Which gospel they first preached, and afterward, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be for time to come the foundation and pillar of our faith. For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they (the Apostles) were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one, alike, the Gospel of God. Matthew then, among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding a church there: and after their exit, Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter; and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by him (Paul). Afterward John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, he likewise published a Gospel, while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia." If any modern divine should write a book upon the genuineness of the Gospels, he could not assert it more expressly, or state their original more distinctly, than Irenæus hath done within little more than a hundred years after they were published.

The correspondency, in the days of Irenæus, of the oral and written tradition, and the deduction of the oral tradition through various channels from the age of the apostles, which was then lately passed, and, by consequence the probability that the books truly delivered what the apostles taught, is inferred also with strict regularity from another passage of his works. "The tradition of the apostles," this father saith, "hath spread itself over the whole universe; and all they, who search after the sources of truth, will find this tradition to be held sacred in every church. We might enumerate all those who have been appointed bishops to these churches by the apostles, and all their successors up to our days. It is by this uninterrupted succession that we have received the tradition which actually exists in the church as also the doctrines of truth, as it was preached by the apostles."† The reader will observe upon this, that the same Irenæus, who is now stating the strength and uniformity of the tradition, we have before seen recognising, in the fullest manner, the authority of the written records; from which we are entitled to conclude, that they were then conformable to each other.

I have said, that the testimony of Irenæus in favour of our Gospels

* Adv. Hæres. l. iii. c. 3. † Iren. in Hær. l. iii, c. 3.

is *exclusive* of all others. I allude to a remarkable passage in his works, in which, for some reasons sufficiently fanciful, he endeavours to shew, that there could be neither more nor fewer Gospels than *four*. With his argument we have no concern. The position itself proves that four, and only four, Gospels were at that time publicly read and acknowledged. That these were our Gospels, and in the state in which we now have them, is shewn, from many other places of this writer beside that which we have already alleged. He mentions how Matthew begins his Gospel, how Mark begins and ends his, and their supposed reasons for so doing. He enumerates at length the several passages of Christ's history in Luke, which are not found in any of the other evangelists. He states the particular design with which Saint John composed his Gospel, and accounts for the doctrinal declarations which precede the narrative.

To the book of the Acts of the Apostles, its author, and credit, the testimony of Irenæus is not less explicit. Referring to the account of Saint Paul's conversion and vocation, in the ninth chapter of that book, "Nor can they," says he, meaning the parties with whom he argues, "shew that he is not to be credited, who has related to us the truth with the greatest exactness." In another place, he has actually collected the several texts, in which the writer of the history is represented as accompanying Saint Paul; which leads him to deliver a summary of almost the whole of the last twelve chapters of the book.

In an author thus abounding with references and allusions to the Scriptures, there is not one to any apocryphal Christian writing whatever. This is a broad line of distinction between our sacred books, and the pretensions of all others.

The force of the testimony of the period which we have considered, is greatly strengthened by the observation, that it is the testimony, and the concurring testimony, of writers who lived in countries remote from one another. Clement flourished at Rome, Ignatius at Antioch, Polycarp at Smyrna, Justin Martyr in Syria, and Irenæus in France.

XI. Omitting Athenagoras and Theophilus, who lived about this time;* in the remaining works of the former of whom are clear references to Mark and Luke; and in the works of the latter, who was bishop of Antioch, the sixth in succussion from the apostles, evident allusions to Matthew and John, and probable allusions to Luke (which considering the nature of the compositions, that they were addressed to heathen readers, is as much as could be expected); observing also, that the works of two learned Christians writers of the same age, Miltiades and Pantænus,† are now lost; of which Miltiades, Eusebius records, that his writings "were monuments of zeal for the divine oracles;" and which Pantænus, as Jerome testifies, was a man of prudence and learning, both in the divine Scriptures and secular literature, and had left many commentaries upon the Holy Scriptures then extant; passing by these without farther remark, we come to one of the most voluminous of ancient Christian writers, Clement of Alexandria.‡ Clement followed Irenæus at the distance of only sixteen years, and therefore may be said to maintain the series of testimony in an uninterrupted continuation.

* Lardner, vol. i. p. 400—422. † Ibid. p. 413. 450.
‡ Lardner. vol. ii. p. 469.

In certain of Clement's works, now lost, but of which various parts are recited by Eusebius, there is given a distinct account of the order in which the four Gospels were written. The Gospels which contain the genealogies, were (he says) written first: Mark's next, at the instance of Peter's followers; and John's the last; and this account he tells us that he had received from presbyters of more ancient times. This testimony proves the following points; that these Gospels were the histories of Christ then publicly received, and relied upon; and that the dates, occasions, and circumstances, of their publication, were at that time subjects of attention and enquiry amongst Christians. In the works of Clement which remain, the four Gospels are repeatedly quoted by the names of their authors, and the Acts of the Apostles is expressly ascribed to Luke. In one place, after mentioning a particular circumstance, he adds these remarkable words: "We have not this passage *in the four Gospels delivered to us*, but in that according to the Egyptians: which puts a marked distinction between the four Gospels and all other histories, or pretended histories, of Christ. In another part of his works, the perfect confidence with which he received the Gospels, is signified by these words; "That this is true, appears from hence, that it is written in the Gospel according to Saint Luke;" and again, "I need not use many words, but only to allege the evangelic voice of the Lord." His quotations are numerous. The sayings of Christ, of which he alleges many, are all taken from our Gospels; the single exception to this observation appearing to be a loose* quotation of a passage in Saint Matthew's Gospel.

XII. In the age in which they lived,† Tertullian joins on with Clement. The number of the Gospels then received, the names of the Evangelists, and their proper descriptions, are exhibited by this writer in one short sentence:—"among the *apostles*, John and Matthew teach us the faith; among *apostolical men*, Luke and Mark refresh it." The next passage to be taken from Tertullian, affords as complete an attestation to the authenticity of our books, as can be well imagined. After enumerating the churches which had been founded by Paul, at Corinth, in Galatia, at Phillippi, Thessalonica, and Ephesus; the church of Rome established by Peter and Paul, and other churches derived from John; he proceeds thus: I say then, that with them, but not with them only which are apostolical, but with all who have fellowship with them in the same faith, is that Gospel of Luke received from its first publication, which we so zealously maintain;" and presently afterwards adds; "The same authority of the apostolical churches will support the other gospels, which we have from them and according to them, I mean John's and Matthew's; although that likewise which Mark published may be said to be Peter's whose inter-

* "Ask great things, and the small shall be added unto you." Clement rather chose to expound the words of Matthew (chap. vi. 33.) than literally to cite them; and this is most undeniably proved by another place in the same Clement, where he both produces the text and these words as an exposition:—"Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, for these are the great things: but the small things, and things relating to this life, shall be added unto you." Jones's New and Full Method, vol. i. p. 553.

† Lardner, vol. ii. p. 561.

preter Mark was. In another place Tertullian affirms, that the three other Gospels were in the hands of the churches from the beginning as well as Luke's. This noble testimony fixes the universality with which the Gospels were received, and their antiquity; that they were in the hands of all, and had been so from the first. And this evidence appears not more than one hundred and fifty years after the publication of the books. The reader must be given to understand, that when Tertullian speaks of maintaining or defending (*tuendi*) the Gospel of Saint Luke, he only means maintaining or defending the integrity of the copies of Luke received by Christian churches, in opposition to certain curtailed copies used by Marcion against whom he writes.

This author frequently cites the Acts of the Apostles under that title, once calls it Luke's Commentary, and observes how Saint Paul's epistles confirm it.

After this general evidence, it is unnecessary to add particular quotations. These however, are so numerous and ample, as to have led Dr. Lardner to observe, "that there are more, and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author, than there are of all the works of Cicero in writers of all characters for several ages."*

Tertullian quotes no Christian writing as of equal authority with the Scriptures, and no spurious books at all; a broad line of distinction, we may once more observe, between our sacred books and all others.

We may again likewise remark the wide extent through which the reputation of the Gospels, and of the Acts of the Apostles, had spread, and the perfect consent, in this point, of distant and independent societies. It is now only about one hundred and fifty years, since Christ was crucified; and within this period, to say nothing of the apostolical fathers who have been noticed already, we have Justin Martyr at Neapolis, Theophilus at Antioch, Irenæus in France, Clement at Alexandria, Tertullian at Carthage, quoting the same books of historical Scriptures, and, I may say, quoting these alone.

XIII. An interval of only thirty years, and that occupied by no small number of christian writers,† whose works only remain in fragments and quotations, and in every one of which is some reference or other to the Gospels (and in one of them, Hippolytus, as preserved in Theodoret, is an abstract of the whole Gospel history), brings us to a name of great celebrity in Christian antiquity, Origen‡ of Alexandria, who, in the quantity of his writings, exceeded the most laborious of the Greek and Latin authors. Nothing can be more peremptory upon the subject now under consideration, and, from a writer of his learning and information, more satisfactory, than the declaration of Origen, preserved in an extract from his works, by Eusebius; "That the four Gospels alone are received without dispute by the

* Lardner, vol. ii. p. 647.

† Minucius Felix, Apollonius, Caius, Asterius, Urbanus, Alexander bishop of Jerusalem, Hippolytus, Ammonius, Julius Africanus.

‡ Lardner, vol. iii. p. 234.

whole church of God under heaven;" to which declaration is immediately subjoined, a brief history of the respective authors, to whom they were then, as they are now, ascribed. The language holden concerning the Gospels, throughout the works of Origen which remain, entirely corresponds with the testimony here cited. His attestation to the Acts of the Apostles is no less positive: "And Luke also once more sounds the trumpet, relating the Acts of the Apostles." The universality with which the Scriptures were then read, is wel. signified by this writer, in a passage in which he has occasion to observe against Celsus, "That it is not in any private books or such as are read by a few only, and those studious persons, but in books read by every body, that it is written. The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by things that are made." It is to no purpose to single out quotations of Scripture from such a writer as this. We might as well make a selection of the quotations of Scripture in Dr. Clarke's Sermons. They are so thickly sown in the works of Origen, that Dr. Mill says "If we had all his works remaining, we should have before us almost the whole text of the Bible."*

Origen notices, in order to censure, certain apocryphal Gospels. He also uses four writings of this sort; that is, throughout his large works he once or twice, at the most, quotes each of the four; but always with some mark, either of direct reprobation or of caution to his readers, manifestly esteeming them of little or no authority.

XIV. Gregory bishop of Neocæsarea, and Dionysius of Alexandria, were scholars of Origen. Their testimony, therefore, though full and particular, may be reckoned a repetition only of his. The series, however, of evidence is continued by Cyprian bishop of Carthage, who flourished within twenty years after Origen. "The church," says this father, "is watered like paradise, by four rivers, that is, by four Gospels." The Acts of the Apostles is also frequently quoted by Cyprian under that name, and the name of the "Divine Scriptures." In his various writings are such constant and copious citations of Scripture, as to place this part of the testimony beyond controversy. Nor is there, in the works of this eminent African bishop, one quotation of a spurious or apocryphal Christian writing.

XV. Passing over a crowd† of writers following Cyprian at different distances, but all within forty years of his time; and who all, in the imperfect remains of their works, either cite the historical Scriptures of the New Testament, or speak of them in terms of profound respect; I single out Victorin, bishop of Pettaw in Germany, merely on account of the remoteness of his situation from that of Origen and Cyprian, who were Africans; by which circumstance his testimony, taken in conjunction with theirs, proves that the Scripture histories, and the same histories, were known and received from one

* Mill. Proleg. cap. vi. p. 66.

† Novatus, Rome, A. D. 251; Dionysius, Rome, A. D. 259; Commodian, A. D. 270; Anatolius, Laodicea, A. D. 270; Theognostus, A D. 282; Methodius, Lycia, A. D. 290; Phileas, Egypt, A. D. 296.

side of the Christian world to the other. This bishop* lived about the year 290; and in a commentary upon this text of the Revelation, "The first was like a lion, the second was like a calf, the third like a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle," he makes out that by the four creatures are intended the four Gospels; and, to show the propriety of the symbols, he recites the subject with which each Evangelist opens his history. The explication is fanciful, but the testimony positive. He also expressly cites the Acts of the Apostles.

XVI. Arnobius and Lactantius,† about the year 300, composed formal arguments upon the credibility of the Christian religion. As these arguments were addressed to Gentiles, the authors abstain from quoting Christian books *by name;* one of them giving this very reason for his reserve; but when they come to state, for the information of their readers, the outlines of Christ's history, it is apparent that they draw their accounts from our Gospels, and from no other sources; for these statements exhibit a summary of almost every thing which is related of Christ's actions and miracles by the four Evangelists. Arnobius vindicates, without mentioning their names, the credit of these historians; observing, that they were eye-witnesses of the facts which they relate, and that their ignorance of the arts of composition was rather a confirmation of their testimony, than an objection to it. Lactantius also argues in defence of this religion, from the consistency, simplicity, disinterestedness, and sufferings, of the Christian historians, meaning by that term our Evangelists.

XVII. We close the series of testimonies with that of Eusebius,‡ bishop of Cæsarea, who flourished in the year 315, contemporary with, or posterior only by fifteen years to the two authors last cited. This voluminous writer, and most diligent collector of the writings of others, beside a variety of large works, composed a history of the affairs of Christianity from its origin to his own time. His testimony to the Scriptures is the testimony of a man much conversant in the works of Christian authors, written during the first three centuries of its era, and who had read many which are now lost. In a passage of his Evangelical Demonstration, Eusebius remarks, with great nicety, the delicacy of two of the Evangelists, in their manner of noticing any circumstance which regarded themselves; and of Mark, as writing under Peter's direction, in the circumstances which regarded him. The illustration of this remark leads him to bring together long quotations from each of the evangelists; and the whole passage is a proof, that Eusebius, and the Christians of those days, not only read the Gospels, but studied them with attention and exactness. In a passage of his Ecclesiastical History, he treats, in form, and at large, of the occasions of writing the four Gospels, and of the order in which they were written. The title of the chapter is, "Of the Order of the Gospels;" and it begins thus; "Let us observe the writings of this apostle John, which are not contradicted by any; and, first of all, must be mentioned, as acknowledged by all, the Gospel according to him, well known to all the churches under heaven; and that it has been justly placed by the ancients the fourth in order, and after the other three, may be made evident in this manner."—Eusebius

* Lardner, vol. v. p. 214. † Ibid, vol. vii. p. 43. 201. ‡ Ib. vol. viii. p. 33.

then proceeds to show that John wrote the last of the four, and that his Gospel was intended to supply the omissions of the others; especially in the part of our Lord's ministry, which took place before the imprisonment of John the Baptist. He observes, "that the apostles of Christ were not studious of the ornaments of composition, nor indeed forward to write at all, being wholly occupied with their ministry."

This learned author makes no use at all of Christian writings, forged with the names of Christ's apostles, or their companions."

We close this branch of our evidence here, because, after Eusebius, there is no room for any question upon the subject; the works of Christian writers being as full of texts of Scripture and of references to Scripture, as the discourses of modern divines. Future testimonies to the books of Scripture could only prove, that they never lost their character or authority.

SECT. II.

When the Scriptures are quoted, or alluded to, they are quoted with peculiar respect, as books sui generis; *as possessing an authority which belonged to no other books, and as conclusive in all questions and controversies amongst Christians.*

BESIDE the general strain of reference and quotation, which uniformly and strongly indicates this distinction, the following may be regarded as specific testimonies.

I. Theophilus* bishop of Antioch, the sixth in succession from the apostles, and who flourished little more than a century after the books of the New Testament were written, having occasion to quote one of our Gospels, writes thus; "These things the Holy Scriptures teach us, and all who were moved by the Holy spirit, among whom John says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." Again: "Concerning the righteousness which the law teaches, the like things are to be found in the Prophets and the *Gospels*, because all, being inspired, spoke by one and the same spirit of God."† No words can testify more strongly than these do, the high and peculiar respect in which these books were holden.

II. A writer against Artemon,‡ who may be supposed to come about one hundred and fifty-eight years after the publication of the Scripture, in a passage quoted by Eusebius, uses these expressions: "Possibly what they (our adversaries) say, might have been credited, *if first of all* the Divine Scriptures did not contradict them; *and then* the writings of certain brethren more ancient than the times of Victor." The brethren mentioned by name, are Justin, Miltiades, Tatian, Clement, Irenæus, Melito, with a general appeal to many more not named. This passage proves, first, that there was at that time a

* Lardner, Cred. part ii. vol. i. p. 429
† Ib. vol. i. p. 448.
‡ Ib. vol. iii. p. 40.

collection called *Divine scriptures*; secondly, that these scriptures were esteemed of higher authority than the writings of the most early and celebrated Christians.

III. In a piece ascribed to Hippolytus* who lived near the same time, the author professes, in giving his correspondent instruction in the things about which he enquires, "to draw out of the *sacred fountain*, and to set before him from the sacred Scriptures, what may afford him satisfaction." He then quotes immediately Paul's epistles to Timothy, and afterwards many books of the New Testament. This preface to the quotations carries in it a marked distinction between the Scriptures and other books.

IV. "*Our* assertions and discourses (saith Origen†), are unworthy of credit; we must receive the *Scriptures* as witnesses." After treating of the duty of prayer, he proceeds with his arguments thus; What we have said may be proved from the Divine Scriptures." In his books against Celsus, we find this passage; "That our religion teaches us to seek after wisdom shall be shewn, both out of the ancient Jewish Scriptures, which we also use, and out of those written since Jesus, which are believed in the churches to be divine." These expressions afford abundant evidence of the peculiar and exclusive authority which the Scriptures possessed.

V. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage,‡ whose age lies close to that of Origen, earnestly exhorts Christian teachers, in all doubtful cases, "to go back to the *fountain*; and, if the truth has in any case been shaken, to recur to the Gospels and apostolic writings."—"The precepts of the Gospel (says he in another place), are nothing less than authoritative divine lessons, the foundations of our hope, the supports of our faith, the guides of our way, the safeguards of our course to heaven."

VI. Novatus,§ a Roman, contemporary with Cyprian, appeals to the Scriptures, as the authority by which all errors were to be repelled, and disputes decided. "That Christ is not only man, but God also, is proved by the sacred authority of the Divine Writings."—"The Divine Scripture easily detects and confutes the frauds of heretics." "It is not by the fault of the heavenly Scriptures which never deceive." Stronger assertions than these could not be used.

VII. At the distance of twenty years from the writer last cited, Anatolius,‖ a learned Alexandrian, and bishop of Laodicea, speaking of the rule for keeping Easter, a question at that day agitated with much earnestness, says of those whom he opposed, "They can by no means prove their point by the authority of the Divine Scriptures"

VIII. The Arians, who sprung up about fifty years after this, argued strenuously against the use of the words consubstantial, and essence, and like phrases; "*because they were not in Scripture.*"¶ And in the same strain, one of their advocates opens a conference with Augustine, after the following manner: "If you say what is

* Lardner, vol. iii. p. 112.
† Ib. Cred. vol. iii. p. 287—289.
‡ Ib. vol. iv. p. 840.
§ Ib. vol v. p. 102.
‖ Ib. p. 146.
¶ Ib. Cred. vol. vii. p. 283—284.

reasonable, I must submit. If you allege any thing from the Divine Scriptures, which are common to both, I must hear. But unscriptural expressions (quæ extra Scripturam sunt) deserve no regard."

Athanasius, the great antagonist of Arianism, after having enumerated the books of the Old and New Testament, adds, "These are the fountain of salvation, that he who thirsts may be satisfied with the oracles contained in them. In these alone the doctrine of salvation is proclaimed. Let no man add to them, or take any thing from them."*

IX. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem,† who wrote about twenty years after the appearance of Arianism, uses these remarkable words: "Concerning the divine and holy mysteries of faith, not the least article ought to be delivered without the Divine Scriptures." We are assured that Cyril's Scriptures were the same as ours, for he has left us a catalogue of the books included under that name.

X. Epiphanius,‡ twenty years after Cyril, challenges the Arians, and the followers of Origen, "to produce any passage of the Old and New Testament, favouring their sentiments."

XI. Pœbadius, a Gallic bishop, who lived about thirty years after the Council of Nice, testifies, that "the bishops of that council first consulted the sacred volumes, and then declared their faith."§

XII. Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, contemporary with Epiphanius, says "that hearers instructed in the Scriptures ought to examine what is said by their teachers, and to embrace what is agreeable to the Scriptures, and to reject what is otherwise."‖

XIII. Ephraim, the Syrian, a celebrated writer of the same times, bears this conclusive testimony to the proposition which forms the subject of our present chapter; "The truth written in the sacred volume of the Gospel, is a perfect rule. Nothing can be taken from it nor added to it, without great guilt."¶

XIV. If we add Jerome to these, it is only for the evidence which he affords of the judgment of preceding ages. Jerome observes, concerning the quotations of *ancient* Christian writers, that is, of writers who were *ancient* in the year 400, that they made a distinction between books; some they quoted as of authority, and others not: which observation relates to the books of Scripture, compared with other writings, apocryphal or heathen.**

* Lardner. vol. xii. p. 182.
† Ib. vol. viii. p. 276.
‡ Ib. p. 314.
§ Ib. vol. ix. p. 52.
‖ Ib. p. 124.
¶ Ib. Cred. vol. ix. p. 202.
** Ib. vol. x. p. 123—124.

SECT. III.

The scriptures were in very early times collected into a distinct volume.

IGNATIUS, who was bishop of Antioch within forty years after the Ascension, and who had lived and conversed with the apostles, speaks of the Gospel and of the apostles in terms which render it very probable that he meant by the Gospel, the book or volume of the Gospels, and by the Apostles, the book or volume of their epistles. His words in one place are,* "Fleeing to the Gospel, as to the flesh of Jesus, and to the apostles as the presbytery of the church;" that is, as Le Clerc interprets them, "in order to understand the will of God, he fled to the Gospels, which he believed no less than if Christ in the flesh had been speaking to him; and to the writings of the apostles, whom he esteemed as the presbytery of the whole Christian church." It must be observed, that about eighty years after this, we have direct proof, in the writings of Clement of Alexandria,† that these two names, "Gospel," and "Apostles," were the names by which the writings of the New Testament, and the division of these writings, were usually expressed.

Another passage from Ignatius is the following; "But the Gospel has somewhat in it more excellent, the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, his passion and resurrection."‡

And a third: "Ye ought to hearken to the prophets, but especially to the Gospel, in which the passion has been manifested to us and the resurrection perfected." In this last passage, the prophets and the Gospel are put in conjunction; and as Ignatius undoubtedly meant by the prophets a collection of writings, it is probable that he meant the same by the Gospel, the two terms standing in evident parrallelism with each other.

This interpretation of the word "Gospel," in the passages above quoted from Ignatius, is confirmed by a piece of nearly equal antiquity, the relation of the martyrdom of Polycarp by the church of Smyrna. "All things (say they) that went before, were done, that the Lord might shew us a martyrdom according to the Gospel, for he expected to be delivered up, as the Lord also did."§ And in another place, "We do not commend those who offer themselves, forasmuch as the Gospel teaches us no such thing."‖ In both these places, what is called the *Gospels*, seems to be the history of Jesus Christ, and of his doctrine.

If this be the true sense of the passages, they are not only evidences of our proposition, but strong and very ancient proofs of the high esteem in which the books of the New Testament were holden.

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* Lardner, part ii. vol. i. p. 180.
† Ib. vol. ii. p. 516.
‡ Ib. Cred. part ii. vol. ii. p. 182.
§ Ignat. Ep. c. i.
‖ Ib. c. iv.

II. Eusebius relates, that Quadratus and some others, who were the immediate successors of the Apostles, travelling abroad to preach Christ, carried the Gospels with them, and delivered them to their converts, "The words of Eusebius are; "Then travelling abroad, they performed the work of evangelists, being ambitious to preach Christ, and *deliver the Scripture of the divine Gospels.*"* Eusebius had before him the writings both of Quadratus himself, and of many others of that age, which are now lost. It is reasonable therefore, to believe, that he had good grounds for his assertion. What is thus recorded of the Gospels, took place within sixty, or, at the most, seventy years after they were published: and it is evident, that they must, before this time (and, it is probable, long before this time), have been in general use, and in high esteem in the churches planted by the apostles, inasmuch as they were now, we find, collected into a volume; and the immediate successors of the Apostles, they who preached the religion of Christ to those who had not already heard it, carried the volume with them, and delivered it to their converts.

III. Irenæus, in the year 178,† puts the evangelic and apostolic writings in connexion with the Law and the Prophets, manifestly intending by the one a code or collection of Christian sacred writings, as the other expressed the code or collection of Jewish sacred writings. And,

IV. Melito, at this time bishop of Sardis, writing to one Onesimus, tells his correspondent,‡ that he had procured an accurate account of the books of the Old Testament. The occurrence, in this passage, of the term *Old* Testament, has been brought to prove, and it certainly does prove, that there was then a volume or collection of writings called the *New* Testament.

V. In the time of Clement of Alexandria, about fifteen years after the last quoted testimony, it is apparent that the Christian Scriptures were divided into parts, under the general titles of the Gospels and Apostles; and that both these were regarded as of the highest authority. One, out of many expressions of Clement, alluding to this distribution, is the following:—"There is a consent and harmony between the Law and the Prophets, the Apostles and the Gospel."§

VI. The same division, "Prophets, Gospels, and Apostles," appears in Tertullian,‖ the contemporary of Clement. The collection of the Gospels is likewise called by this writer the "Evangelic Instrument;"¶ the whole volume, the "New Testament;" and the two parts, the "Gospels and Apostles."**

VII. From many writers also of the third century, and especially from Cyprian, who lived in the middle of it, it is collected, that the Christian Scriptures were divided into two codes or volumes, one called the "Gospels, or Scriptures of the Lord," the other, the "Apostles, or Epistles of the Apostles."††

VIII. Eusebius, as we have already seen, takes some pains to shew,

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* Lardner, Cred. part ii. vol. i. p. 236.
† Ib. vol. i. p. 383. ‡ Ib. p. 331. § Ib. vol. ii. p. 516.
‖ Ib. p. 631. ¶ Ib. p. 574. ** Ib. p. 632.
†† Ib. vol. iv. p. 846.

that the Gospel of St. John had been justly placed by the ancients 'the fourth in order, and after the other three."* These are the terms of his proposition: and the very introduction of such an argument proves incontestably, that the four Gospels had been collected into a volume, to the exclusion of every other; that their order in the volume had been adjusted with much consideration; and that this had been done by those who were called ancients in the time of Eusebius.

In the Diocletian persecution, in the year 303, the Scriptures were sought out and burnt:† many suffered death rather than deliver them up, and those who betrayed them to the persecutors, were accounted as lapsed and apostate. On the other hand, Constantine, after his conversion, gave directions for multiplying copies of the divine oracles, and for magnificently adorning them, at the expense of the imperial treasury.‡ What the Christians of that age so richly embellished in their prosperity, and which is more, so tenaciously preserved under persecution, was the very volume of the New Testament which we now read.

SECT. IV.

Our present sacred writings were soon distinguished by appropriate names and titles of respect.

POLYCARP. "I trust that ye are well exercised in the *Holy Scriptures*;—as in these Scriptures it is said, Be ye angry and sin not, and let not the sun go down upon your wrath."§ This passage is extremely important; because it proves that, in the time of Polycarp, who had lived with the apostles, there were Christian writings, distinguished by the name of "Holy Scriptures," or *Sacred* Writings. Moreover, the text quoted by Polycarp is a text found in the collection at this day. What also the same Polycarp hath elsewhere quoted in the same manner, may be considered as proved to belong to the collection; and this comprehends Saint Matthew's, and probably Saint Luke's Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles, ten epistles of Paul, the First Epistle of Peter, and the First of John.‖ In another place, Polycarp has these words: "Whoever perverts the *oracles of the Lord* to his own lusts, and says there is neither resurrection nor judgment, he is the first-born of Satan."¶—It does not appear what else Polycarp could mean by the "oracles of the Lord," but those same "Holy Scriptures," or Sacred Writings, of which he had spoken before.

II. Justin Martyr, whose apology was written about thirty years after Polycarp's epistle, expressly cites some of our present histories under the title of Gospel, and that not as a name by him first ascribed to them, but as the name by which they were generally known

* Lardner, Cred. vol. viii. p. 90
† Ib. vol. vii. p. 214, &c
‡ Ib. vol. vii. p. 432.
§ Ib. vol. i. p. 203.
‖ Ib. vol. i. p. 223.
¶ Ib. p. 222.

in his time. His words are these:—"For the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, *which are called Gospels*, have thus delivered it, that Jesus commanded them to take bread, and give thanks."* There exists no doubt, but that, by the memoirs above mentioned, Justin meant our present historical Scriptures; for throughout his works, he quotes these, and no others.

III. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, who came thirty years after Justin, in a passage preserved in Eusebius (for his works are lost), speaks "of the Scriptures of the Lord."†

IV. And at the same time, or very nearly so, by Irenæus bishop of Lyons in France,‡ they are called "Divine Scriptures,"—"Divine Oracles,"—"Scriptures of the Lord,"—"Evangelic and Apostolic Writings."§ The quotations of Irenæus prove decidedly, that our present Gospels, and these alone, together with the Acts of the Apostles, were the historical books comprehended by him under these appellations.

V. Saint Matthew's Gospel is quoted by Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, contemporary with Irenæus, under the title of the "Evangelic Voice;"‖ and the copious works of Clement of Alexandria, published within fifteen years of the same time, ascribe to the books of the New Testament the various titles of "Sacred Books,"—"Divine Scriptures,"—"Divinely inspired Scriptures,"—"Scriptures of the Lord,"—"the true Evangelical Canon."¶

VI. Tertullian, who joins on with Clement, beside adopting most of the names and epithets above noticed, calls the Gospels "our Digesta," in allusion, as it should seem, to some collection of Roman laws then extant."**

VII. By Origen, who came thirty years after Tertullian, the same and other no less strong titles, are applied to the Christian Scriptures, and, in addition thereunto, this writer frequently speaks of the "Old and New Testament,"—"the Ancient and New Scriptures,"—"the Ancient and New Oracles."††

VIII. In Cyprian, who was not twenty years later, they are "Books of the Spirit,"—"Divine Fountains,"—"Fountain of the Divine Fulness."‡‡

The expressions we have thus quoted, are evidences of high and peculiar respect. They all occur within two centuries from the publication of the books. Some of them commence with the companions of the Apostles, and they increase in number and variety, through a series of writers touching one upon another, and deduced from the first age of the religion.

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* Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 271. † Ib. p. 298.

‡ The reader will observe the remoteness of these two writers in country and situation.

§ Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 343, &c. ‖ Ib. p. 427.

¶ Ib. vol ii. p. 515. ** Ib. p. 630. †† Ib. vol. iii. p. 230.

‡‡ Ib. vol. iv. p. 844.

SECT. V.

Our Scriptures were publicly read and expounded in the religious assemblies of the early Christians.

JUSTIN Martyr, who wrote in the year 140, which was seventy or eighty years after some, and less, probably, after others of the Gospels were published, giving, in his first apology, an account to the emperor of the Christian worship, has this remarkable passage:

"The *Memoirs of the Apostles*, or the Writings of the Prophets, are *read* according as the time allows: and when the reader has ended, the president makes a discourse, exhorting to the imitation of so excellent things."*

A few short observations will shew the value of this testimony.

1. The "Memoirs of the Apostles," Justin in another place expressly tells us, are what are called "Gospels:" and that they were the Gospels which we now use, is made certain by Justin's numerous quotations of *them*, and his silence about any others.

2. Justin describes the general usage of the Christian church.

3. Justin does not speak of it as recent or newly instituted, but in the terms in which men speak of established customs.

II. Tertullian, who followed Justin at the distance of about fifty years, in his account of the religious assemblies of Christians as they were conducted in his time, says, "We come together to recollect the Divine Scriptures; we nourish our faith, raise our hope, confirm our trust, by the sacred word."†

III. Eusebius records of Origen, and cites for his authority the letters of bishops contemporary with Origen, that, when he went into Palestine about the year 216, which was only sixteen years after the date of Tertullian's testimony, he was desired by the bishops of that country to discourse and expound the Scriptures publicly in the church, though he was not yet ordained a presbyter.‡ This anecdote recognises the usage, not only of reading, but of expounding, the Scriptures; and both as subsisting in full force. Origen also himself bears witness to the same practice: "This (says he) we do, when the Scriptures are read in the church, and when the discourse for explication is delivered to the people."§ And, what is a still more ample testimony, many homilies of his upon the Scriptures of the New Testament, delivered by him in the assemblies of the church, are still extant.

IV. Cyprian, whose age was not twenty years lower than that of Origen, gives his people an account of having ordained two persons, who were before confessors, to be readers; and what they were to read, appears by the reason which he gives for his choice: "Nothing (says Cyprian) can be more fit, than that he, who has made a glorious confession of the Lord, should read publicly in the church; that he who has shewn himself willing to die a martyr, should read the *Gospel of Christ*, by which martyrs are made."‖

V. Intimation of the same custom may be traced in a great num-

* Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 273. † Ib. vol. ii. p. 628. ‡ Ib. vol. iii. p. 68.
§ Ib. p. 302. ‖ Ib. vol. iv. p. 842.

ber of writers in the beginning and throughout the whole of the fourth century. Of these testimonies I will only use one, as being, of itself, express and full. Augustine, who appeared near the conclusion of the century, displays the benefit of the Christian religion on this very account, the public reading of the Scriptures in the churches, "where (says he) is a confluence of all sorts of people of both sexes; and where they hear how they ought to live well in this world, that they may deserve to live happily and eternally in another." And this custom he declares to be universal: "The canonical books of Scripture being read every where, the miracles therein recorded are well known to all people."*

It does not appear that any books, other than our present Scriptures, were thus publicly read, except that the epistle of Clement was read in the church of Corinth to which it had been addressed, and in some others: and that the Shepherd of Hermas was read in many churches. Nor does it subtract much from the value of the argument, that these two writings partly come within it, because we allow them to be the genuine writings of apostolical men. There is not the least evidence, that any other Gospel, than the four which we receive, was ever admitted to this distinction.

SECT. VI.

Commentaries were anciently written upon the Scriptures; harmonies formed out of them; different copies carefully collated; and versions made of them into different languages.

NO greater proof can be given of the esteem in which these books were holden by the ancient christians, or of the sense then entertained of their value and importance, than the industry bestowed upon them. And it ought to be observed, that the value and importance of these books consisted entirely in their genuineness and truth. There was nothing in them, as works of taste, or as compositions, which could have induced any one to have written a note upon them. Moreover it shews that they were even *then* considered as ancient books. Men do not write comments upon publications of their own times: therefore the testimonies cited under this head afford an evidence which carries up the evangelic writings much beyond the age of the testimonies themselves, and to that of their reputed authors.

I. Tatian, a follower of Justin Martyr, and who flourished about the year 170, composed a harmony, or collation of the Gospels, which he called *Diatessaron*, Of the four.† The title, as well as the work, is remarkable; because it shews that then, as now, there were four, and only four, Gospels in general use with Christians. And this was little more than a hundred years after the publication of some of them.

II. Pantænus, of the Alexandrian school, a man of great reputation and learning, who came twenty years after Tatian, wrote many com-

* Lardner, Cred. vol. x. p. 276, &c. † Ib. vol. i. p. 307.

mentaries upon the Holy Scriptures, which, as Jerome testifies, were extant in his time.*

III. Clement of Alexandria, wrote short explications of many books of the Old and New Testament.†

IV. Tertullian appeals from the authority of a later version, then in use, to the authentic Greek.‡

V. An anonymous author, quoted by Eusebius, and who appears to have written about the year 212, appeals to the *ancient copies* of the Scriptures, in refutation of some corrupt readings alleged by the followers of Artemon.§

VI. The same Eusebius, mentioning by name several writers of the church who lived at this time, and concerning whom he says, "There still remain divers monuments of the laudable industry of those ancient and ecclesiastical men." (*i. e.* of Christian writers who were considered as ancient in the year 300), adds, "There are besides, treatises of many others, whose names we have not been able to learn, orthodox and ecclesiastical men, as the interpretations of the Divine Scriptures given by each of them shew."‖

VII. The last five testimonies may be referred to the year 200; immediately after which, a period of thirty years gives us

Julius Africanus, who wrote an epistle upon the apparent difference in the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, which he endeavours to reconcile by the distinction of natural and legal descent, and conducts his hypothesis with great industry through the whole series of generations.¶

Ammonius, a learned Alexandrian, who composed, as Tatian had done, a harmony of *the four Gospels;* which proves, as Tatian's work did, that there were four Gospels, and no more, at this time in use in the church. It affords also an instance of the zeal of Christians for those writings, and of their solicitude about them.**

And, above both these, Origen, who wrote commentaries, or homilies, upon most of the books included in the New Testament, and upon no other books but these. In particular, he wrote upon Saint John's Gospel, very largely upon Saint Matthew's, and commentaries, or homilies, upon the Acts of the Apostles.††

VIII. In addition to these, the third century likewise contains

Dionysius of Alexandria, a very learned man, who compared with great accuracy, the accounts in the four Gospels of the time of Christ's resurrection, adding a reflection which shewed his opinion of their authority: "Let us not think that the evangelists disagree, or contradict each other, although there be some small difference; but let us honestly and faithfully endeavour to reconcile what we read."‡‡

Victorin, bishop of Pettaw, in Germany, who wrote comments upon Saint Matthew's Gospel.§§

Lucian, a presbyter of Antioch; and Hesychius an Egyptian bishop, who put forth editions of the New Testament.

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* Lardner, Cred. vol. i. p. 455. † Ib. vol. ii. p. 462. ‡ Ib. p. 638.
§ Ib. vol. iii. p. 46. ‖ Ib. vol. ii. p. 551.
¶ Ib. vol, iii. p. 170. ** Ib. p. 122.
†† Ib. p. 352, 192, 202, 245.
‡‡ Ib. vol. iv. p. 166. §§ Ib. p. 195

IX. The fourth century supplies a catalogue* of fourteen writers, who expended their labours upon the books of the New Testament, and whose works or names are come down to our times; amongst which number it may be sufficient, for the purpose of shewing the sentiments and studies of learned Christians of that age, to notice the following:

Eusebius, in the very beginning of the century, wrote expressly upon the discrepancies observable in the Gospels, and likewise a treatise, in which he pointed out what things are related by four, what by three, what by two, and what by one evangelist.† This author also testifies, what is certainly a material piece of evidence, "that the writings of the apostles had obtained such an esteem, as to be translated into every language both of Greeks and Barbarians, and to be diligently studied by all nations."‡ This testimony was given about the year 300; how long *before* that date these translations were made does not appear.

Damasus, bishop of Rome, corresponded with Saint Jerome upon the exposition of difficult texts of Scripture; and, in a letter still remaining, desires Jerome to give him a clear explanation of the word Hosanna, found in the New Testament; "he (Damasus) having met with very different interpretations of it in the Greek and Latin commentaries of Catholic writers which he had read."§ This last clause shews the number and variety of commentaries then extant.

Gregory of Nyssen, at one time, appeals to the most exact copies of Saint Mark's Gospel; at another time, compares together, and proposes to reconcile the several accounts of the resurrection *given by the four Evangelists*; which limitation proves, that there were no other histories of Christ deemed authentic beside these, or included in the same character with these. This writer observes, acutely enough, that the disposition of the clothes in the sepulchre, the napkin that was about our Saviour's head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself, did not bespeak the terror and hurry of thieves, and therefore refutes the story of the body being stolen.‖

Ambrose, bishop of Milan, remarked various readings in the Latin copies of the New Testament, and appeals to the original Greek;

And Jerome, towards the conclusion of this century, put forth an edition of the New Testament in Latin, corrected, at least as to the Gospels, by Greek copies, "and those (he says) ancient."

Lastly, Chrysostom, it is well known, delivered and published a great many homilies, or sermons, upon the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

It is needless to bring down this article lower; but it is of import-

* Eusebius, A. D. 315
Juvencus, Spain 330
Theodore, Thrace 334
Hilary Poictiers 354
Fortunatus 340
Apollinarius of Laodicea 362
Damasus, Rome 366
Gregory, Nyssen 371
Didimus of Alex. 370
Ambrose of Milan 374
Diodore of Tarsus 378
Gaudent. of Brescia 387
Theodore of Cilicia 394
Jerome 392
Chrysostom 398

† Lardner, Cred. vol. viii. p. 46.
‡ Ib. p. 201.
§ Ib. vol. ix. p. 108.
‖ Ib. p. 163.

ance to add, that there is no example of Christian writers of the first three centuries composing comments upon any other books than those which are found in the New Testament, except the single one of Clement of Alexandria commenting upon a book called the Revelation of Peter.

Of the *ancient versions* of the New Testament, one of the most valuable is the Syriac. Syriac was the language of Palestine when Christianity was there first established. And although the books of Scripture were written in Greek, for the purpose of a more extended circulation than within the precincts of Judea, yet, it is probable that they would soon be translated into the vulgar language of the country where the religion first prevailed. Accordingly, a Syriac translation is now extant, all along, so far as it appears, used by the inhabitants of Syria, bearing many internal marks of high antiquity, supported in its pretensions by the uniform traditions of the east, and confirmed by the discovery of many very ancient manuscripts in the libraries of Europe. It is about two hundred years since a bishop of Antioch sent a copy of this translation into Europe, to be printed: and this seems to be the first time that the translation became generally known to these parts of the world. The bishop of Antioch's Testament was found to contain all our books, except the second epistle of Peter, the second and third of John, and the Revelation; which books, however, have since been discovered in that language in some ancient manuscripts of Europe. But in this collection, no other book, beside what is in ours, appears ever to have had a place. And, which is worthy of observation, the text, though preserved in a remote country, and without communication with ours, differs from ours very little, and in nothing that is important.*

SECT. VII.

Our Scriptures were received by ancient Christians of different sects and persuasions, by many heretics as well as Catholics, and were usually appealed to by both sides in the controversies which arose in those days.

THE three most ancient topics of controversy amongst Christians, were, the authority of the Jewish constitution, the origin of evil, and the nature of Christ. Upon the first of these we find, in very early times, one class of heretics rejecting the Old Testament entirely; another contending for the obligation of its law, in all its parts, throughout its whole extent, and over every one who sought acceptance with God. Upon the two latter subjects, a natural, perhaps, and venial, but a fruitless, eager, and impatient curiosity, prompted by the philosophy, and by the scholastic habits of the age, which carried men much into bold hypotheses and conjectural solutions, raised, amongst some who professed christianity, very wild and unfounded opinions. I think there is no reason to believe that the number of

* Jones on the Canon, vol. i. c. 14.

these bore any considerable proportion to the body of the Christian church; and amidst the disputes which such opinions necessarily occasioned, it is a great satisfaction to perceive, what, in a vast plurality of instances, we do perceive, all sides recurring to the same Scriptures.

I. * Basilides lived near the age of the apostles, about the year 120, or, perhaps, sooner.† He rejected the Jewish institution, not as spurious, but as proceeding from a being, inferior to the true God; and in other respects advanced a scheme of theology widely different from the general doctrine of the Christian church, and which, as it gained over some disciples, was warmly opposed by Christian writers of the second and third century. In these writings, there is positive evidence that Basilides received the Gospel of Matthew; and there is no sufficient proof that he rejected any of the other three: on the contrary, it appears that he wrote a commentary upon the Gospel, so copious as to be divided into twenty-four books.‡

II. The Valentinians appeared about the same time.§ Their heresy consisted in certain notions concerning angelic natures, which can hardly be rendered intelligible to a modern reader. They seem, however, to have acquired as much importance as any of the separatists of that early age. Of this sect, Irenæus, who wrote, A. D. 172, expressly records that they endeavoured to fetch arguments for their opinions from the evangelical and apostolic writings.‖ Heracleon, one of the most celebrated of the sect, and who lived probably so early as the year 125, wrote commentaries upon Luke and John.¶ Some observations also of his upon Matthew are preserved by Origen.** Nor is there any reason to doubt that he received the whole New Testament.

III. The Carpocratians were also an early heresy, little, if at all, later than the two preceding.†† Some of their opinions resembled what we at this day mean by Socinianism. With respect to the Scriptures, they are specifically charged, by Irenæus and by Epiphanius, with endeavouring to pervert a passage in Matthew, which amounts to a positive proof that they received that Gospel.‡‡ Negatively, they are not accused, by their adversaries, of rejecting any part of the New Testament.

IV. The Sethians, A. D. 150;§§ the Montanists, A. D. 156;‖‖ the Marcosians, A. D. 160;¶¶ Hermogenes, A. D. 180;*† Praxias, A. D. 196;*‡ Artemon, A. D. 200;*§ Theodotus, A. D. 200; all included under the denomination of heretics, and all engaged in controversies with Catholic Christians, received the Scriptures of the New Testament.

V. Tatian, who lived in the year 172, went into many extravagant

* The materials of the former part of this section are taken from Dr. Lardner's History of the Heretics of the first two Centuries, published since his death, with additions, by the Rev. Mr. Hogg, of Exeter, and inserted into the ninth volume of his works, of the edition of 1788.

† Lardner, vol. ix. ed. 1788, p. 271. ‡ Ib. p. 305, 306.
§ Ib. p. 350, 351. ‖ Ib. vol. i. p. 383.
¶ Ib. p. 352. ** Ib. 353. †† Ib. 309.
‡‡ Ib. 318. §§ Ib. 455. ‖‖ Ib. 482. ¶¶ Ib. 318.
*† Ib. 473. *‡ Ib. 433. *§ Ib. 466.

opinions, was the founder of a sect called Encratites, and was deeply involved in disputes with the Christians of that age; yet Tatian so received the four Gospels, as to compose a harmony from them.

VI. From a writer, quoted by Eusebius, of about the year 300, it is apparent that they who at that time contended for the mere humanity of Christ, argued from the Scriptures; for they are accused by this writer, of making alterations in their copies, in order to favour their opinions.*

VII. Origen's sentiments excited great controversies,—the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, and many others, condemning, the bishops of the east espousing them; yet there is not the smallest question, but that both the advocates and adversaries of these opinions acknowledged the same authority of Scripture. In his time, which the reader will remember was about one hundred and fifty years after the Scriptures were published, many dissensions subsisted amongst Christians, with which they were reproached by Celsus; yet Origen, who has recorded this accusation without contradicting it, nevertheless testifies, that the four Gospels were received *without dispute*, by the whole church of God under heaven.†

VIII. Paul of Samosata, about thirty years after Origen, so distinguished himself in the controversy concerning the nature of Christ, as to be the subject of two councils or synods, assembled at Antioch upon his opinions. Yet he is not charged by his adversaries with rejecting any book of the New Testament. On the contrary, Epiphanius, who wrote a history of heretics a hundred years afterward, says, that Paul endeavoured to support his doctrine by texts of Scripture. And Vincentius Lirinensis, A. D. 434, speaking of Paul and other heretics of the same age, has these words: "Here, perhaps, some one may ask, whether heretics also urge the testimony of Scripture. They urge it indeed, explicitly and vehemently; for you may see them flying through every book of the sacred law.‡"

IX. A controversy at the same time existed with the Noetians or Sabellians, who seem to have gone into the opposite extreme from that of Paul of Samosata and his followers. Yet, according to the express testimony of Epiphanius, Sabellius received all the Scriptures. And with both sects Catholic writers constantly allege the Scriptures, and reply to the arguments which their opponents drew from particular texts.

We have here, therefore, a proof, that parties, who were the most opposite and irreconcileable to one another, acknowledged the authority of Scripture with equal deference.

X. And as a general testimony to the same point, may be produced what was said by one of the bishops of the council of Carthage, which was holden a little before this time,—"I am of opinion that the blasphemous and wicked heretics, who *pervert* the sacred and adorable words of the Scriptures, should be execrated."§ Undoubtedly what they perverted, they received.

XI. The Millennium, Novatianism, the baptism of heretics, the

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* Lardner, vol. iii. p. 46. † Ib. vol. iv. p. 642.
‡ Ib. vol. xi. p. 158. § Ib. p. 839.

keeping of Easter, engaged also the attention and divided the opinions of Christians, at and before that time (and, by the way, it may be observed, that such disputes, though on some accounts to be blamed, shewed how much men were in earnest upon the subject) yet every one appealed for the grounds of his opinion to Scripture authority. Dionysius of Alexandria, who flourished A. D. 247, describing a conference or public disputation with the Millennarians o Egypt, confesses of them, though their adversary, "that they embrace whatever could be made out by good arguments from the Holy Scriptures."* Novatus, A. D. 251, distinguished by some rigid sentiments concerning the reception of those who had lapsed, and the founder of a numerous sect, in his few remaining works quotes the Gospel with the same respect as other Christians did; and concerning his followers, the testimony of Socrates, who wrote about the year 440, is positive, *viz.* "That in the disputes between the Catholics and them, each side endeavoured to support itself by the authority of the Divine Scriptures."†

XII. The Donatists, who sprung up in the year 328, used the same Scriptures as we do, "Produce (saith Augustine) some proof from the Scriptures, whose authority is common to us both."‡

XIII. It is perfectly notorious, that, in the Arian controversy, which arose soon after the year 300, both sides appealed to the same Scriptures, and with equal professions of deference and regard. The Arians, in their council of Antioch, A. D. 341, pronounce, that, "if any one contrary to the sound doctrine of the Scriptures, say, that the Son is a creature, as one of the creatures, let him be an anathema."§ They and the Athanasians mutually accuse each other of using *unscriptural* phrases; which was a mutual acknowledgement of the conclusive authority of Scripture.

XIV. The Priscillianists, A. D. 378,‖ the Pelagians, A. D. 405,¶ received the same Scriptures as we do.

XV. The testimony of Chrysostom, who lived near the year 400, is so positive in affirmation of the proposition which we maintain, that it may form a proper conclusion of the argument. "The general reception of the Gospels is a proof that their history is true and consistent, for, since the writing of the Gospels, many heresies have arisen, holding opinions contrary to what is contained in them, who yet receive the Gospels either entire or in part."** I am not moved by what may seem a deduction from Chrysostom's testimony, the words, "entire or in part;" for, if all the parts, which were ever questioned in our Gospels, were given up, it would not affect the miraculous origin of the religion in the smallest degree: *e. g.*

Cerinthus is said by Epiphanius to have received the Gospel of Matthew, but not entire. What the omissions were, does not appear. The common opinion, that he rejected the first two chapters, seems to have been a mistake.†† It is agreed, however, by all who have given

* Lardner, vol. iv. p. 666. † Ib. vol. v. p. 105.
‡ Ib. vol. vii. p. 243. § Ib. p. 277.
‖ Ib. vol. ix. p. 325. ¶ Ib. vol. xi. p. 52.
** Ib. vol. x. p. 316 †† Ib. vol. ix. ed. 1788. p. 322

any account of Cerinthus, that he taught that the Holy Ghost (whether he meant by that name a person or a power) descended upon Jesus at his baptism: that Jesus from this time performed many miracles, and that he appeared after his death. He must have retained therefore the essential parts of the history.

Of all the ancient heretics, the most extraordinary was Marcion.* One of his tenets was the rejection of the Old Testament, as proceeding from an inferior and imperfect deity; and in pursuance of this hypothesis he erased from the New, and that, as it should seem, without entering into any critical reasons, every passage which recognised the Jewish Scriptures. He spared not a text which contradicted his opinion. It is reasonable to believe that Marcion treated books as he treated texts; yet this rash and wild controversialist published a recension, or chastised edition, of Saint Luke's Gospel, containing the leading facts, and all which is necessary to authenticate the religion. This example affords proof, that there were always some points, and those the main points, which neither wildness nor rashness, neither the fury of opposition nor the intemperance of controversy, would venture to call in question. There is no reason to believe that Marcion, though full of resentment against the Catholic Christians, ever charged them with forging their books. "The Gospel of Saint Matthew, the Epistle to the Hebrews, with those of Saint Peter and Saint James, as well as the Old Testament in general (he said), were writings not for Christians but for Jews."† This declaration shews the ground upon which Marcion proceeded in his mutilation of the Scriptures, *viz.* his dislike of the passages or the books. Marcion flourished about the year 130.

Dr. Lardner, in his general Review, sums up this head of evidence in the following words: Noëtus, Paul of Samosata, Sabellius, Marcellus, Photinus, the Novatians, Donatists, Manicheans,‡ Priscillianists, beside Artemon, the Audians, the Arians, and divers others, all received most or all the same books of the New Testament, which the Catholics received; and agreed in a like respect for them as written by apostles, or their disciples and companions.§

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* Lardner, sect. ii. c. x. Also Michael, vol. i. c. i. sect. xviii.

† I have transcribed this sentence from Michaelis (p. 38), who has not however referred to the authority upon which he attributes these words to Marcion.

‡ This must be with an exception, however, of Faustus, who lived so late as the year 384.

§ Lardner, vol. xii. p. 12.—Dr. Lardner's future enquiries supplied him with many other instances.

SECT. VIII.

The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of Saint Paul, the first Epistle of John, and the First of Peter, were received without doubt by those who doubted concerning the other books which are included in our present canon.

I STATE this proposition, because, if made out, it shews that the authenticity of their books was a subject amongst the early Christians of consideration and inquiry; and that, where there was cause of doubt, they did doubt; a circumstance which strengthens very much their testimony to such books as were received by them with full acquiescence.

I. Jerome, in his account of Caius, who was probably a presbyter of Rome, and who flourished near the year 200, records of him, that, reckoning up only thirteen epistles of Paul, he says the fourteenth, which is inscribed to the Hebrews, is not his: and then Jerome adds, "With the Romans to this day it is not looked upon as Paul's." This agrees in the main with the account given by Eusebius of the same ancient author and his work; except that Eusebius delivers his own remark in more guarded terms: "And indeed to this very time by *some* of the Romans, this epistle is not thought to be the apostle's."*

II. Origen, about twenty years after Caius, quoting the Epistle to the Hebrews, observes that some might dispute the authority of that epistle; and therefore proceeds to quote to the same point, as un*doubted* books of Scripture, the Gospel of Saint Matthew, the Acts of the Apostles, and Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians.† And in another place, this author speaks of the Epistle to the Hebrews thus:—"The account come down to us is various; some saying that Clement, who was bishop of Rome, wrote this epistle; others, that it was Luke, the same who wrote the Gospel and the Acts." Speaking also, in the same paragraph, of Peter, "Peter (says he) has left one epistle, acknowledged; let it be granted likewise that he wrote a second, for it is doubted of." And of John, "He has also left one epistle, of a very few lines; grant also a second and a third, for all do not allow them to be genuine." Now let it be noted, that Origen, who thus discriminates, and thus confesses his own doubts, and the doubts which subsisted in his time, expressly witnesses concerning the four Gospels, "that they alone are received without dispute by the whole church of God under heaven."‡

III. Dionysius of Alexandria, in the year 247, doubts concerning the book of Revelation, whether it was written by Saint John; states the grounds of his doubt, represents the diversity of opinion concerning it, in his own time, and before his time.§ Yet the same Dionysius, uses and collates the four Gospels in a manner which shews that he entertained not the smallest suspicion of *their* authority, and in a

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* Lardner, vol. iii. p. 240. † Ib. p. 246. ‡ Ib. p. 234.
§ Ib. vol. iv. p. 670.

manner also which shews that they, and they alone, were received as authentic histories of Christ.*

IV. But this section may be said to have been framed on purpose to introduce to the reader two remarkable passages extant in Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History. The first passage opens with these words;—"Let us observe the writings of the apostle John which are *uncontradicted;* and first of all must be mentioned, as acknowledged of all, the Gospel according to him, well known to all the churches under heaven." The author then proceeds to relate the occasions of writing the Gospels, and the reasons for placing Saint John's the last, manifestly speaking of all the four as parallel in their authority, and in the certainty of their original.† The second passage is taken from a chapter, the title of which is, "Of the Scriptures *universally acknowledged,* and of those that are not such." Eusebius begins his enumeration in the following manner;—"*In the first place,* are to be ranked the sacred four Gospels; then the book of the Acts of the Apostles; after that are to be reckoned the Epistles of Paul. In the next place, that called the First Epistle of John, and the Epistle of Peter, are to be esteemed authentic. After this is to be placed, if it be thought fit, the Revelation of John, about which we shall observe the different opinions at proper seasons. Of the controverted, but yet well known or approved by the most, are, that called the Epistle of James, and that of Jude, and the Second of Peter, and the Second and Third of John, whether they are written by the evangelist, or another of the same name."‡ He then proceeds to reckon up five others, not in our canon, which he calls in one place *spurious,* in another *controverted,* meaning, as appears to me, nearly the same thing by these two words.§

It is manifest from this passage, that the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles (the parts of Scripture with which our concern principally lies,) were acknowledged without dispute, even by those who raised objections or entertained doubts, about some other parts of the same collection. But the passage proves something more than this. The author was extremely conversant in the writings of Christians, which had been published from the commencement of the institution to his own time: and it was from these writings that he drew his knowledge of the character and reception of the books in question, That Eusebius recurred to this medium of information, and that he had examined with attention this species of proof, is shewn, first, by a passage in the very chapter we are quoting, in which, speaking of the books which he calls spurious, "None, (says he) of the ecclesiastical writers, in the succession of the apostles, have vouchsafed to make any mention of them in their writings;" and, secondly, by another passage of the same work, wherein, speaking of the First Epistle of Peter, "This (says he) the presbyters of ancient times have quoted in their writings as undoubtedly genuine;"‖ and then, speaking of

* Lardner, vol. iv. p. 661.

† Ib. vol. viii. p. 90. ‡ Ib. p. 89.

§ That Eusebius could not intend, by the word rendered "spurious," what we at present mean by it, is evident from a clause in this very chapter, where, speaking of the Gospels of Peter, and Thomas, and Matthias, and some others, he says, "They are not so much as to be reckoned among the *spurious,* but are to be rejected as altogether absurd and impious." Vol. viii. p. 98.

‖ Lardner, vol. viii. p. 99.

some other writing bearing the name of Peter, "We know (he says), that they have not been delivered down to us in the number of Catholic writings, forasmuch as no ecclesiastical writer of the ancients, or of our times, has made use of testimonies out of them." "But in the progress of this history," the author proceeds, "we shall make it our business to shew, together with the successions from the apostles, what ecclesiastical writers, in every age, have used such writings as these which are contradicted, and what they have said with regard to the Scriptures received in the New Testament, *and acknowledged by all*, and with regard to those which are not such."*

After this it is reasonable to believe, that when Eusebius states the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, as uncontradicted, uncontested and acknowledged by all; and when he places them in opposition, not only to those which were spurious, in our sense of that term, but to those which were controverted, and even to those which were well known and approved by many, yet doubted of by some; he represents not only the sense of his own age, but the result of the evidence which the writings of prior ages, from the apostle's time to his own, had furnished to his inquiries. The opinion of Eusebius and his contemporaries appears to have been founded upon the testimony of writers whom they *then* called ancient: and we may observe, that such of the works of these writers as have come down to our times, entirely confirm the judgment, and support the distinction which Eusebius proposes. The books which he calls "books universally acknowledged," are in fact used and quoted in the remaining works of Christian writers, during the two hundred and fifty years between the apostle's time and that of Eusebius, much more frequently than, and in a different manner from, those, the authority of which, he tells us, was disputed.

SECT. IX.

Our historical Scriptures were attacked by the early adversaries of Christianity, as containing the accounts upon which the religion was founded.

NEAR the middle of the second century, Celsus, a heathen philosopher, wrote a professed treatise against Christianity. To this treatise, Origen, who came about fifty years after him, published an answer, in which he frequently recites his adversary's words and arguments. The work of Celsus is lost; but that of Origen remains. Origen appears to have given us the words of Celsus, where he professes to give them, very faithfully; and, amongst other reasons for thinking so, this is one, that the objection, as stated by him from Celsus, is sometimes stronger than his own answer. I think it also probable, that Origen, in his answer, has retailed a large portion of the work of Celsus: "That it may not be suspected (he says), that we pass by any chapters, because we have no answers at hand, I have

* Lardner, vol. viii. p. 111

thought it best, according to my ability, to confute every thing proposed by him, not so much observing the natural order of things, as the order which he has taken himself."*

Celsus wrote about one hundred years after the Gospels were published; and therefore any notices of these books from him are extremely important for their antiquity. They are however, rendered more so by the character of the author; for, the reception, credit, and notoriety, of these books, must have been well established amongst Christians, to have made them subjects of animadversion and opposition by strangers and by enemies. It evinces the truth of what Chrysostom, two centuries afterward, observed, that "the Gospels, when written, were not hidden in a corner or buried in obscurity, but they were made known to all the world, before enemies as well as others, even as they are now."†

1. Celsus, or the Jew whom he personates, uses these words:—"I could say many things concerning the affairs of Jesus; too different, from those written by the disciples of Jesus; but I purposely omit them."‡ Upon this passage it has been rightly observed, that it is not easy to believe, that if Celsus could have contradicted the disciples upon good evidence in any material point, he would have omitted to do so, and that the assertion is, what Origen calls it, a mere oratorical flourish.

It is sufficient, however, to prove, that in the time of Celsus, there were books well known, and allowed to be written by the disciples of Jesus, which books contained a history of him. By the term *disciples*, Celsus does not mean the followers of Jesus in general; for them he calls Christians, or believers, or the like; but those who had been taught by Jesus himself, *i. e.* his apostles and companions.

2. In another passage, Celsus accuses the Christians, of altering the Gospel.§ The accusation refers to some variations in the readings of particular passages: for Celsus goes on to object, that when they are pressed hard, and one reading has been confuted, they disown that, and fly to another. We cannot perceive from Origen, that Celsus specified any particular instances, and without such specification, the charge is of no value. But the true conclusion to be drawn from it is, that there were in the hands of the Christians, histories, which were even then of some standing: for, various readings and corruptions do not take place in recent productions.

The former quotation, the reader will remember, proves that these books were composed by the disciples of Jesus, strictly so called; the present quotation shews, that, though objections were taken by the adversaries of the religion to the integrity of these books, none were made to their genuineness.

3. In a third passage, the Jew, whom Celsus introduces, shuts up an argument in this manner:—"These things then we have alleged to you out of *your own writings*, not needing any other weapons."‖ It is manifest that this boast proceeds upon the supposition that the books,

* Orig. cont. Cels. l. i. sect. xli. † In Matt. Hom. i. 7.
‡ Lardner, Jewish and Heathen Test. vol. ii. p. 274.
§ Ib. vol. ii. p. 275. ‖ Ib. p. 276.

over which the writer affects to triumph, possessed an authority by which Christians confessed themselves to be bound.

4. That the books to which Celsus refers were no other than our present Gospels, is made out by his allusions to various passages still found in these Gospels. Celsus takes notice of the *genealogies*, which fixes two of these Gospels; of the precepts, Resist not him that injures you, and, If a man strike thee on the one cheek, offer to him the other also;* of the woes denounced by Christ; of his predictions; of his saying, that it is impossible to serve two masters;† of the purple robe, the crown of thorns, and the reed in his hand; of the blood that flowed from the body of Jesus upon the cross;‡ which circumstance is recorded by John alone; and (what is *instar omnium* for the purpose for which we produce it) of the difference in the accounts given of the resurrection by the evangelists, some mentioning two angels at the sepulchre, others only one.§

It is extremely material to remark, that Celsus not only perpetually referred to the accounts of Christ contained in the four Gospels,‖ but that he referred to no other accounts; that he founded none of his objections to Christianity upon any thing delivered in spurious Gospels.

II. What Celsus was in the second century, Porphyry became in the third. His work, which was a large and formal treatise against the Christian religion, is not extant. We must be content therefore to gather his objections from Christian writers, who have noticed in order to answer them; and enough remains of this species of information to prove completely, that Porphyry's animadversions were directed against the contents of our present Gospels, and of the Acts of the Apostles; Porphyry considering that to overthrow *them* was to overthrow the religion. Thus he objects to the repetition of a generation in Saint Matthew's genealogy; to Matthew's call: to the quotation of a text from Isaiah, which is found in a psalm ascribed to Asaph; to the calling of the lake of Tiberias a sea; to the expression in Saint Matthew, "the abomination of desolation;" to the variation in Matthew and Mark upon the text, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," Matthew citing it from Isaias, Mark from the Prophets: to John's application of the term "Word; to Christ's change of intention about going up to the feast of tabernacles (John vii. 8.); to the judgment denounced by Saint Peter upon Ananias and Sapphira, which he calls an imprecation of death.¶

The instances here alleged, serve, in some measure, to shew the nature of Porphyry's objections, and prove that Porphyry had read the Gospels with that sort of attention which a writer would employ who regarded them as the depositaries of the religion which he attacked. Besides these specifications, there exists, in the writings of ancient Christians, general evidence, that the places of Scripture upon which Porphyry had remarked were very numerous.

* Lardner, Jewish and Heathen Test. vol. ii. p. 276. † Ib. p. 277.
‡ Ib. p. 280, 281. § Ib. p. 282.
‖ The particulars, of which the above are only a few, are well collected by Mr. Bryant, p. 140.
¶ Jewish and Heathen Test. vol. iii. p. 166, &c.

In some of the above-cited examples, Porphyry, speaking of Saint Matthew, calls him *your evangelist;* he also uses the term evangelists in the plural number. What was said of Celsus, is true likewise of Porphyry, that it does not appear that he considered any history of Christ, except these as having authority with Christians.

III. A third great writer against the Christian religion was the emperor Julian, whose work was composed about a century after that of Porphyry.

In various long extracts, transcribed from this work by Cyril and Jerome it appears,* that Julian noticed *by name* Matthew and Luke, in the difference between their genealogies of Christ; that he objected to Matthew's application of the prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," (ii. 15.) and to that of "A virgin shall conceive;" (i. 23.) that he recited sayings of Christ, and various passages of his history, in the very words of the evangelists; in particular, that Jesus healed lame and blind people, and exorcised demoniacs, in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany; that he alleged, that none of Christ's disciples ascribed to him the creation of the world, except John; that neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, have dared to call Jesus, God; that John wrote later than the other evangelists, and at a time when a great number of men in the cities of Greece and Italy were converted; that he alludes to the conversion of Cornelius and of Sergius Paulus, to Peter's vision, to the circular letter sent by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, which are all recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: by which quoting of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and by quoting no other, Julian shews that these were the historical books, and the only historical books, received by Christians as of authority, and as the authentic memoirs of Jesus Christ, of his apostles, and of the doctrines taught by them. But Julian's testimony does something more than represent the judgment of the Christian church in his time. It discovers also his own. He himself expressly states the early date of these records; he calls them by the names which they now bear. He all along supposes, he no where attempts to question, their genuineness.

The argument in favour of the books of the New Testament, drawn from the notice taken of their contents by the early writers against the religion, is very considerable. It proves that the accounts, which Christians had then, were the accounts which we have now; that our present Scriptures were theirs. It proves, moreover, that neither Celsus in the second, Porphyry in the third, nor Julian in the fourth century, suspected the authenticity of these books, or even insinuated that Christians were mistaken in the authors to whom they ascribed them. Not one of them expressed an opinion upon this subject different from that which was holden by Christians. And when we consider how much it would have availed them to have cast a doubt upon this point, if they could; and how ready they shewed themselves to be, to take every advantage in their power; and that they were all men of learning and inquiry; their concession, or rather their suffrage, upon the subject, is extremely valuable.

* Jewish and Heathen Test. vol. iv. p. 77, &c.

In the case of Porphyry, it is made still stronger, by the consideration that he did in fact support himself by this species of objection when he saw any room for it, or when his acuteness could supply any pretence for alleging it. The prophecy of Daniel he attacked upon this very ground of spuriousness, insisting that it was written after the time of Antiochus Ephiphanes, and maintains his charge of forgery by some far-fetched indeed, but very subtle criticisms. Concerning the writings of the New Testament, no trace of this suspicion is any where to be found in him.*

SECT. X.

Formal catalogues of authentic Scriptures were published, in all which our present sacred histories were included.

THIS species of evidence comes later than the rest; as it was not natural that catalogues of any particular class of books should be put forth until Christian writings became numerous; or until some writings shewed themselves, claiming titles which did not belong to them, and thereby rendering it necessary to separate books of authority from others. But when it does appear, it is extremely satisfactory; the catalogues, though numerous, and made in countries at a wide distance from one another, differing very little, differing in nothing which is material, and all containing the four Gospels. To this last article there is no exception.

I. In the writings of Origen which remain, and in some extracts preserved by Eusebius, from works of his which are now lost, there are enumerations of the books of Scripture, in which the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are distinctly and honourably specified, and in which no books appear beside what are now received.† The reader, by this time, will easily recollect that the date of Origen's works is A. D. 230.

II. Athanasius, about a century afterward, delivered a catalogue of the books of the New Testament in form, containing our Scriptures and no others; of which he says, "In these alone the doctrine of religion is taught; let no man add to them, or take any thing from them."‡

III. About twenty years after Athanasius, Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, set forth a catalogue of the books of Scripture, publicly read at that time in the church of Jerusalem, exactly the same as ours, except that the "Revelation is omitted."§

IV. And fifteen years after Cyril, the council of Laodicea delivered an authoritative catalogue of canonical Scripture, like Cyril's, the same as ours, with the omission of the "Revelation."

V. Catalogues now became frequent. Within thirty years after the

* Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament, vol. i. p. 43. Marsh's Translation.

† Lardner, Cred. vol. iii. p. 234, &c. vol. viii. p. 196.

‡ Ib. vol. viii. p. 223. § Ib. p. 279

last date, that is, from the year 363 to near the conclusion of the fourth century, we have catalogues by Epiphanius,* by Gregory Nazianzen,† by Philaster bishop of Brescia in Italy,‡ by Amphilochius bishop of Iconium, all, as they are sometimes called, *clean* catalogues (that is, they admit no books into the number beside what we now receive), and all, for every purpose of historic evidence, the same as ours.§

VI. Within the same period, Jerome, the most learned Christian writer of his age, delivered a catalogue of the books of the New Testament, recognising every book now received, with the intimation of a doubt concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews alone, and taking not the least notice of any book which is not now received.‖

VII. Contemporary with Jerome, who lived in Palestine, was Saint Augustine, in Africa, who published likewise a catalogue, without joining to the Scriptures, as books of authority, any other ecclesiastical writing whatever, and without omitting one which we at this day acknowledge.¶

VIII. And with these concurs another contemporary writer, Rufen, presbyter of Aquileia, whose catalogue, like theirs, is perfect and unmixed, and concludes with these remarkable words; "These are the volumes which the fathers have included in the canon, and out of which they would have us prove the doctrine of our faith."**

SECT. XI.

These propositions cannot be predicated of any of those books which are commonly called the Apocryphal books of the New Testament.

I do not know that the objection taken from apocryphal writings is at present much relied upon by scholars. But, there are many, who, hearing that various Gospels existed in ancient times under the names of the apostles, may have taken up a notion, that the selection of our present Gospels from the rest, was rather an arbitrary or accidental choice, than founded in any clear and certain cause of preference. To these it may be very useful to know the truth of the case. I observe, therefore,

I. That, beside our Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, no Christian history, claiming to be written by an apostle or apostolical man, is quoted within three hundred years after the birth of Christ, by any writer now extant, or known; or if quoted, is not quoted with marks of censure and rejection.

I have not advanced this assertion without inquiry; and I doubt not but that the passages cited by Mr. Jones, and Dr. Lardner, under the several titles which the apocryphal books bear; or a reference to the

* Lardner, Cred. vol. viii. p. 368.

† Ib. vol. ix. p. 182. ‡ Ib. p. 373.

§ Ephiphanius omits the Acts of the Apostles. This must have been an accidental mistake, either in him or in some copyist of his work; for he elsewhere expressly refers to this book, and ascribes it to Luke.

‖ Lardner, Cred. vol. x. p. 77. ¶ Ib. p. 213. ** Ib. p. 187.

places where they are mentioned as collected in a very accurate table, published in the year 1773, by the Rev. J. Atkinson, will make out the truth of the proposition to the satisfaction of every fair and competent judgment. If there be any book which may seem to form an exception to the observation, it is a Hebrew Gospel, which was circulated under the various titles of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel of the Nazarenes, of the Ebionites, sometimes called of the Twelve, by some ascribed to Saint Matthew. This Gospel is *once* and only *once*, cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived, the reader will remember, in the latter part of the second century, and which same Clemens quotes one or other of our four Gospels in almost every page of his work. It is twice mentioned by Origen, A. D. 230; and both times with marks of diminution and discredit. And this is the ground upon which the exception stands. But what is still more material to observe is, that this Gospel, in the main, agreed with our present Gospel of Saint Matthew.*

Now if, with this account of the apocryphal Gospels, we compare what we have read concerning the canonical Scriptures in the preceding sections: or even recollect that general but well-founded assertion of Dr. Lardner, "That, in the remaining works of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, who all lived in the first two centuries, there are more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament, than of all the works of Cicero, by writers of all characters, for several ages;"† and if to this we add, that, notwithstanding the loss of many works of the primitive times of Christianity, we have, within the above-mentioned period, the remains of Christian writers, who lived in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, the part of Africa that used the Latin tongue, in Crete, Greece, Italy, and Gaul, in all which remains, references are found to our evangelists; I apprehend, that we shall perceive a clear and broad line of division, between those writings, and all others pretending to similar authority.

II. But beside certain *histories* which assumed the names of apostles, and which were forgeries properly so called, there were some other Christian writings, in the whole, or in part of an historical nature, which, though not forgeries, are denominated apocryphal, as being of uncertain or of no authority.

Of this second class of writings, I have found only two which are noticed by any author of the first three centuries, without express terms of condemnation; and these are, the one, a book entitled the Preaching of Peter, quoted repeatedly by Clemens Alexandrinus, A. D. 196; the other, a book entitled the Revelation of Peter, upon which the above-mentioned Clemens Alexandrinus is said, by Eusebius, to have written notes: and which is twice cited in a work still extant, ascribed to the same author.

I conceive therefore, that the proposition we have before advanced,

* In applying to this Gospel, what Jerome in the latter end of the fourth century has mentioned of a Hebrew Gospel, I think it probable that we sometimes confound it with a Hebrew copy of Saint Matthew's Gospel, whether an original or version, which was then extant.

† Lardner, Cred. vol. xii. p. 53.

even after it hath been subjected to every exception, of every kind, that can be alleged, separates, by a wide interval, our historical Scriptures from all other writings which profess to give an account of the same subject.

We may be permitted however to add,

1. That there is no evidence that any spurious or apocryphal books whatever existed in the first century of the Christian era, in which century all our historical books are proved to have been extant. "There are no quotations of any such books in the apostolical fathers, by whom I mean Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, whose writings reach from about the year of our Lord 70, to the year 108 (and some of whom have quoted each and every one of our historical Scriptures); I say this," adds Dr. Lardner, "because I think it has been proved."*

2. These apocryphal writings were not read in the churches of Christians.

3. Were not admitted into their volume;

4. Do not appear in their catalogues;

5. Were not noticed by their adversaries;

6. Were not alleged by different parties as of authority in their controversies.

7. Were not the subjects, amongst them, of commentaries, versions, collations, expositions.

Finally; beside the silence of three centuries, or evidence, within that time, of their rejection, they were, with a consent nearly universal, reprobated by Christian writers of succeeding ages.

Although it be made out by these observations, that the books in question never obtained any degree of credit and notoriety which can place them in competition with our Scriptures; yet it appears, from the writings of the fourth century, that many such existed in that century, and in the century preceding it. It may be difficult at this distance of time to account for their origin. Perhaps the most probable explication is, that they were in general composed with a design of making a profit by the sale. Whatever treated of the subject, would find purchasers. It was an advantage taken of the pious curiosity of unlearned Christians. With a view to the same purpose, they were many of them adapted to the particular opinions of particular sects, which would naturally promote their circulation amongst the favourers of those opinions. After all, they were probably much more obscure than we imagine. Except the Gospel according to the Hebrews, there is none of which we hear more than the Gospel of the Egyptians; yet there is good reason to believe that Clement, a presbyter of Alexandria in Egypt, A. D. 184, and a man of almost universal reading, had never seen it.† A Gospel according to Peter, was another of the most ancient books of this kind; yet Serapion, bishop of Antioch, A. D. 200, had not read it, when he heard of such a book being in the hands of the Christians of Rhossus in Cilicia: and speaks of obtaining a sight of this Gospel from some sectaries who used it.‡ Even of the Gospel of the Hebrews, which confessedly

* Lardner, Cred. vol. xii. p. 158.

† Jones, vol. i. p. 243. ‡ Lardner, Cred. vol. ii. p. 557.

stands at the head of the catalogue, Jerome, at the end of the fourth century, was glad to procure a copy by the favour of the Nazarenes of Berea. Nothing of this sort ever happened, or could have happened concerning our Gospels.

One thing is observable of all the apocryphal Christian writings, *viz.* that they proceed upon the same fundamental history of Christ and his apostles, as that which is disclosed in our Scriptures. The mission of Christ, his power of working miracles, his communication of that power to the apostles, his passion, death, and resurrection, are assumed or asserted by every one of them. The names under which some of them came forth, are the names of men of eminence in our histories. What these books give, are not contradictions, but unauthorized additions. The principal facts are supposed, the principal agents the same; which shews, that these points were too much fixed to be altered or disputed.

If there be any book of this description, which appears to have imposed upon some considerable number of learned Christians, it is the Sybilline Oracles; but, when we reflect upon the circumstances which facilitated that imposture, we shall cease to wonder either at the attempt or its success. It was at that time universally understood, that such a prophetic writing existed. Its contents were kept secret. This situation afforded to some one a hint, as well as an opportunity, to give out a writing under this name, favourable to the already established persuasion of Christians, and which writing, by the aid and recommendation of these circumstances, would in some degree, it is probable, be received. Of the ancient forgery we know but little: what is now produced, could not, in my opinion, have imposed upon any one. It is nothing else than the Gospel history, woven into verse; perhaps was at first rather a fiction than a forgery; an exercise of ingenuity, more than an attempt to deceive.

CHAPTER X.

Recapitulation.

THE reader will now be pleased to recollect, that the two points which form the subject of our present discussion, are, first, that the Founder of Christianity, his associates, and immediate followers, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings; secondly, that they did so, in attestation of the miraculous history recorded in our Scriptures, and solely in consequence of their belief of the truth of that history.

The argument, by which these two propositions have been maintained by us, stands thus:

No historical fact, I apprehend, is more certain, than that the original propagators of Christianity voluntarily subjected themselves to lives of fatigue, danger, and suffering, in the prosecution of their undertaking. The nature of the undertaking; the character of the person employed in it; the opposition of their tenets to

the fixed opinions and expectations of the country in which they first advanced them; their undissembled condemnation of the religion of all other countries; their total want of power, authority, or force; render it in the highest degree probable that this must have been the case. The probability, is increased, by what we know of the fate of the Founder of the institution, who was put to death for his attempt; and by what we also know of the cruel treatment of the converts to the institution, within thirty years after its commencement; both which points are attested by heathen writers, and, being once admitted, leave it very incredible that the primitive emissaries of the religion, who exercised their ministry, first, amongst the people who had destroyed their Master, and, afterward, amongst those who persecuted their converts, should themselves escape with impunity, or pursue their purpose in ease and safety. This probability, thus sustained by foreign testimony, is advanced, I think, to historical certainty, by the evidence of our own books; by the accounts of a writer who was a companion of the persons whose sufferings he relates; by the letters of the persons themselves; by predictions of persecutions ascribed to the Founder of the religion, which predictions would not have been inserted in this history, much less have been studiously dwelt upon, if they had not accorded with the event and which, even if falsely ascribed to him, could only have been so ascribed, because the event suggested them; lastly, by incessant exhortations to fortitude and patience, and by an earnestness, repetition, and urgency, upon the subject, which were unlikely to have appeared, if there had not been, at the time, some extraordinary call for the exercise of these virtues.

It is made out also, I think, with sufficient evidence, that both the teachers and converts of the religion, in consequence of their new profession, took up a new course of life and behaviour.

The next great question is, what they did this FOR. That it was *for* a miraculous story of some kind or other, is to my apprehension extremely manifest; because, as to the fundamental article, the designation of the person, *viz.* that this particular person, Jesus of Nazareth, ought to be received as the Messiah, or as a messenger from God, they neither had, nor could have, any thing but miracles to stand upon. That the exertions and sufferings of the apostles were *for* the story which we have now, is proved by the consideration that this story is transmitted to us by two of their own number, and by two others personally connected with them; that the particularity of the narrative proves that the writers claimed to possess circumstantial information, that from their situation they had full opportunity of acquiring such information, that they certainly, at least, knew what their colleagues, their companions, their masters, taught; that each of these books contains enough to prove the truth of the religion; that if any one of them therefore be genuine, it is sufficient; that the genuineness however of all of them is made out, as well by the general arguments which evince the genuineness of the most undisputed remains of antiquity, as also by peculiar and specific proofs, *viz.* by citations from them in writings belonging to a period immediately contiguous to that in which they were published; by the distinguished regard paid by

early Christians to the autnority of these books (which regard was manifested by their collecting of them into a volume, appropriating to that volume titles of peculiar respect, translating them into various languages, digesting them into harmonies, writing commentaries upon them, and, still more conspicuously, by the reading of them in their public assemblies in all parts of the world); by a universal agreement with respect to *these* books, whilst doubts were entertained concerning some others; by contending sects appealing to them; by the early adversaries of the religion not disputing their genuineness, but, on the contrary, treating them as the depositaries of the history upon which the religion was founded; by many formal catalogues of these, as of certain and authoritative writings, published in different and distant parts of the Christian world; lastly, by the absence or defect of the above-cited topics of evidence, when applied to any other histories of the same subject.

These are strong arguments to prove, that the books actually proceeded from the authors whose names they bear (and have always borne, for there is not a particle of evidence to shew that they ever went under any other); but the strict genuineness of the books is perhaps more than is necessary to the support of our proposition. For even supposing that, by reason of the silence of antiquity, or the loss of records, we knew not who were the writers of the four Gospels, yet the fact, that they were received as authentic accounts of the transaction upon which the religion rested, and were received as such by Christians, at or near the age of the apostles, by those whom the apostles had taught, and by societies which apostles had founded; this fact, I say, connected with the consideration, that they are corroborative of each other's testimony, and that they are farther corroborated by another contemporary history, taking up the story where they had left it, and, in a narrative built upon that story, accounting for the rise and production of changes in the world; the effects of which subsist at this day; connected, moreover, with the confirmation which they receive from letters written by the apostles themselves, which both assume the same general story, and, as often as occasions lead them to do so, allude to particular parts of it; and connected also with the reflection, that if the apostles delivered any different story, it is lost (the present and no other being referred to by a series of Christian writers, down from their age to our own; being likewise recognised in a variety of institutions, which prevailed early and universally, amongst the disciples of the religion); and that so great a change, as the oblivion of one story and the substitution of another, under such circumstances, could not have taken place: this evidence would be deemed, I apprehend, sufficient to prove concerning these books, that, whoever were the authors of them, they exhibit the story which the apostles told, and for which consequently, they acted, and they suffered.

If it be so, the religion must be true. These men could not be deceivers. By only not bearing testimony, they might have avoided all these sufferings, and have lived quietly. Would men in such circumstances pretend to have seen what they never saw; assert facts which they had no knowledge of; go about lying, to teach virtue; and, though not only convinced of Christ's being an impostor, but

having seen the success of his imposture in his crucifixion, yet persist in carrying it on; and so persist, as to bring upon themselves, for nothing, and with a full knowledge of the consequence, enmity and hatred, danger and death?

OF THE DIRECT HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

PROPOSITION II.

CHAPTER I.

Our first proposition was, "*That there is satisfactory evidence that many, pretending to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings voluntarily undertaken and undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of the truth of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.*"

Our second proposition, and which now remains to be treated of, is, "*That there is* not *satisfactory evidence, that persons pretending to be original witnesses of any other similar miracles, have acted in the same manner, in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of the truth of those accounts.*"

I ENTER upon this part of my argument, by declaring how far my belief in miraculous accounts goes. If the reformers in the time of Wickliffe, or of Luther; or those of England, in the time of Henry the Eighth, or of queen Mary; or the founders of our religious sects since, such as were Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Wesley in our own times; had undergone the life of toil and exertion, of danger and sufferings, which we know that many of them did undergo, *for* a miraculous story; that is to say, if they had founded their public ministry upon the allegation of miracles wrought within their own knowledge, and upon narratives which could not be resolved into delusion or mistake; and if it had appeared, that their conduct really had its origin in these accounts, I should have believed them. Or, to borrow an instance which will be familiar to every one of my readers, if the late Mr. Howard had undertaken his labours and journeys in attestation, and in consequence of a clear and sensible miracle, I should have believed him also. Or, to represent the same thing under a third supposition; if Socrates had professed to perform public miracles at Athen's; if the friends of Socrates, Phædo, Cebes, Crito, and Simmias, together with Plato, and many of his followers, relying upon the attestations which these miracles afforded to his pretensions, had, at the hazard of their lives, and the certain expense of

their ease and tranquillity, gone about Greece, after his death, to publish and propagate his doctrines; and if these things had come to our knowledge, in the same way as that in which the life of Socrates is now transmitted to us, through the hands of his companions and disciples, that is, by writings received without doubt as theirs, from the age in which they were published to the present, I should have believed this likewise. And my belief would, in each case, be much strengthened, if the subject of the mission were of importance to the conduct and happiness of human life; if it testified any thing which it behoved mankind to know from such authority; if the nature of what it delivered, required the sort of proof which it alleged; if the occasion was adequate to the interposition, the end worthy of the means. In the last case, my faith would be much confirmed, if the effects of the transaction *remained;* more especially, if a change had been wrought, at the time, in the opinion and conduct of such numbers, as to lay the foundation of an institution, and of a system of doctrines, which had since overspread the greatest part of the civilized world. I should have believed, I say, the testimony, in these cases; yet none of them do more than come up to the apostolic history.

If any one choose to call assent to its evidence credulity, it is at least incumbent upon him to produce examples in which the same evidence hath turned out to be fallacious. And this contains the precise question which we are now to agitate.

In stating the comparison between our evidence, and what our adversaries may bring into competition, with ours, we will divide the distinctions which we wish to propose into two kinds,—those which relate to the proof, and those which relate to the miracles. Under the former head we may lay out of the case.

I. Such accounts of supernatural events as are found only in histories by some ages posterior to the transaction, and of which it is evident that the historian could know little more than his reader. Ours is contemporary history. This difference alone removes out of our way, the miraculous history of Pythagoras, who lived five hundred years before the Christian era, written by Porphyry and Jamblicus, who lived three hundred years after that era; the prodigies of Livy's history; the fables of the heroic ages; the whole of the Greek and Roman, as well as of the Gothic mythology; a great part of the legendary history of Popish saints, the very best attested of which is extracted from the certificates that are exhibited during the process of their canonization, a ceremony which seldom takes place till a century after their deaths. It applies also with considerable force to the miracles of Apollonius Tyaneus, which are contained in a solitary history of his life, published by Philostratus, above a hundred years after his death; and in which, whether Philostratus, had any prior account to guide him, depends upon his single unsupported assertion. Also to some of the miracles of the third century, especially to one extraordinary instance, the account of Gregory, bishop of Neocesarea, called Thaumaturgus, delivered in the writings of Gregory of Nyssen, who lived one hundred and thirty years after the subject of his panegyric.

The value of this circumstance is shewn to have been accurately exemplified in the history of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the order of

Jesuits.* His life written by a companion of his, and by one of the order, was published about fifteen years after his death. In which life, the author, so far from ascribing any miracles to Ignatius, industriously states the reasons why he was not invested with any such power. The life was republished fifteen years afterward, with the addition of many circumstances, which were the fruit, the author says, of farther enquiry, and of diligent examination; but still with a total silence about miracles. When Ignatius had been dead nearly sixty years, the Jesuits, conceiving a wish to have the founder of their order placed in the Roman calendar, began, as it should seem, for the first time, to attribute to him a catalogue of miracles which could not then be distinctly disproved; and which there was, in those who governed the church, a strong disposition to admit upon the slenderest proofs.

II. We may lay out of the case, accounts published in one country, of what passed in a distant country, without any proof that such accounts were known or received at home. In the case of Christianity, Judea, which was the scene of the transaction was the centre of the mission. The story was published in the place in which it was acted. The church of Christ was planted at Jerusalem itself. With that church, others corresponded. From thence the primitive teachers of the institution went forth; thither they assembled. The church of Jerusalem, and the several churches of Judea, subsisted from the beginning, and for many ages;† received also the same books and the same accounts, as other churches did.

This distinction disposes, amongst others, of the above-mentioned miracles of Apollonius Tyaneus, most of which are related to have been performed in India; no evidence remaining that either the miracles ascribed to him, or the history of those miracles, were ever heard of in India. Those of Francis Xavier, the Indian missionary with many others of the Romish breviary, are liable to the same objection, *viz.* that the accounts of them were published at a vast distance from the supposed scene of the wonders.‡

III. We lay out of the case *transient* rumours. Upon the first publication of an extraordinary account, or even of an article of ordinary intelligence, no one, who is not personally acquainted with the transaction, can know whether it be true or false, because any man may publish any story. It is in the future confirmation, or contradiction, of the account; in its permanency, or its disappearance; its dying away into silence, or its increasing in notoriety; its being followed up by subsequent accounts, and being repeated in different and independent accounts; that solid truth is distinguished from fugitive lies. This distinction is altogether on the side of Christianity. The story did not drop. On the contrary, it was succeeded by a train of action and events dependent upon it. The accounts which we have in our hands, were composed after the first reports must have subsided. They were followed by a train of writings upon the subject. The historical testimonies of the transaction were many and various, and connected with letters, discourses,

* Douglas's Criterion of Miracles, p. 74.

† The succession of many eminent bishops of Jerusalem in the first three centuries, is distinctly preserved; as Alexander, A. D. 212, who succeeded Narcissus, then 116 years old.

‡ Douglas's Crit. p. 84.

controversies, apologies, successively produced by the same transaction.

IV. We may lay out of the case what I call *naked* history. It has been said, that if the prodigies of the Jewish history had been found only in fragments of Manetho, or Berosus, we should have paid no regard to them: and I am willing to admit this. If we knew nothing of the fact, but from the fragment; if we possessed no proof that these accounts had been credited and acted upon, from times, probably as ancient, as the accounts themselves; if we had no visible effects connected with the history, no subsequent or collateral testimony to confirm it; under these circumstances, I think it would be undeserving of credit. But this certainly is not our case. In appreciating the evidence of Christianity, the books are to be combined with the institution; with the prevalency of the religion at this day; with the time and place of its origin, which are acknowledged points; with the circumstances of its rise and progress, as collected from external history; with the fact of our present books being received by the votaries of the institution from the beginning: with that of other books coming after these, filled with accounts of effects and consequences resulting from the transaction, or referring to the transaction, or built upon it; lastly, with the consideration of the number and variety of the books themselves, the different writers from which they proceed, the different views with which they were written, so disagreeing as to repel the suspicion of confederacy, so agreeing as to shew that they were founded in a common original, *i. e.* in a story substantially the same. Whether this proof be satisfactory or not, it is properly accumulation of evidence, by no means a naked or solitary record.

V. A mark of historical truth, although only a certain way, and to a certain degree, is *particularity*, in names, dates, places, circumstances, and in the order of events preceding or following the transaction: of which kind, for instance, is the particularity in the description of Saint Paul's voyage and shipwreck, in the 27th chapter of the Acts, which no man, I think, can read, without being convinced that the writer was there; and also in the account of the cure and examination of the blind man in the ninth chapter of Saint John's Gospel, which bears every mark of personal knowledge on the part of the historian.* I do not deny that fiction has often the particularity of truth; but then it is of studied and elaborate fiction, or of a formal attempt to deceive, that we observe this. Since, however, experience proves that particularity is not confined to truth, I have stated that it is a proof of truth only to a certain extent, *i. e.* it reduces the question to this, whether we can depend or not upon the *probity* of the relater? Which is a considerable advance in our present argument; for an express attempt to deceive, in which case alone particularity can appear without truth, is charged upon the evangelists by few. If the historian acknowledge himself to have received his intelligence from others, the particularity of the narrative shews, *primâ facie*, the accuracy of his enquiries, and the fullness of his information. This remark belongs to Saint Luke's history. Of the particularity which we allege, many examples may be found in all

* Both these chapters ought to be read for the sake of this very observation.

the Gospels. And it is very difficult to conceive, that such numerous particularities, as are almost every where to be met with in the Scriptures, should be raised out of nothing, or be spun out of the imagination without any fact to go upon.*

It is to be remarked, however, that this particularity is only to be looked for in direct history. It is not natural in references or allusions, which yet, in other respects, often afford, as far as they go, the most unsuspicious evidence.

VI. We lay out of the case such stories of supernatural events, as require, on the part of the hearer, nothing more than an *otiose* assent; stories upon which nothing depends, in which no interest is involved, nothing is to be done or changed in consequence of believing them. Such stories are credited, if the careless assent that is given to them deserve that name, more by the indolence of the hearer, than by his judgment: or though not much credited, are passed from one to another, without inquiry or resistance. To this case, and to this case alone, belongs what is called the love of the marvellous. I have never known it to carry men farther. Men do not suffer persecution from the love of the marvellous. Of the indifferent nature we are speaking of, are most vulgar errors and popular superstitions: most for instance, of the current reports of apparitions. Nothing depends upon their being true or false. But not, surely, of this kind were the alleged miracles of Christ and his apostles. They decided, if true, the most important question upon which the human mind can fix its anxiety. They claimed to regulate the opinions of mankind, upon subjects in which they are not only deeply concerned, but usually refractory and obstinate. Men could not be utterly careless in such a case as this. If a Jew took up the story, he found his darling partiality to his own nation and law wounded: if a Gentile, he found his idolatry and polytheism reprobated and condemned. Whoever entertained the account, whether Jew or Gentile, could not avoid the following reflection;—"If these things be true, I must give up the opinions and principles in which I have been brought up, the religion in which my fathers lived and died." It is not conceivable that a man should do this upon any idle report or frivolous account, or, indeed, without being fully satisfied and convinced of the truth and credibility of the narrative to which he trusted. But it did not stop at opinions. They who believed Christianity, acted upon it. Many made it the express business of their lives to publish the intelligence. It was required of those who admitted that intelligence, to change forthwith their conduct and their principles, to take up a different course of life, to part with their habits and gratifications, and begin a new set of rules, and system of behaviour. The apostles, at least, were interested not to sacrifice their ease, their fortunes, and

* There is always some truth where there are considerable particularities related; and they always seem to bear some proportion to one another. Thus there is a great want of the particulars of time, place, and persons, in Manetho's account of the Egyptian Dynasties, Ctesias's of the Assyrian Kings, and, those which the technical chronologers have given of the ancient kingdoms of Greece; and agreeably thereto, the accounts have much fiction and falsehood, with some truth; whereas Thucydides's History of the Peloponesian War, and Cæsar's of the War in Gaul, in both which the particulars of time, place, and persons, are mentioned, are universally esteemed true to a great degree of exactness. Hartley, vol. ii. p. 109.

their lives, for an idle tale; multitudes besides them were induced, by the same tale, to encounter opposition, danger, and sufferings.

If it be said, that the mere promise of a future state would do all this; I answer, that the mere promise of a future state, without any evidence to give credit or assurance to it, would do nothing. A few wandering fishermen, talking of a resurrection of the dead, could produce no effect. If it be farther said, that men easily believe what they anxiously desire; I again answer that, in my opinion, the very contrary of this is nearer to the truth. Anxiety of desire, earnestness of expectation, the vastness of an event, rather causes men to disbelieve, to doubt, to dread a fallacy, to distrust, and to examine. When our Lord's resurrection was first reported to the apostles, they did not believe, we are told, for joy. This was natural, and is agreeable to experience.

VII. We have laid out of the case those accounts which require no more than a simple assent; and we now also lay out of the case those which come merely *in affirmance* of opinions already formed. This last circumstance is of the utmost importance to notice well. It has long been observed, that Popish miracles happen in Popish countries; that they make no converts: which proves that stories are accepted, when they fall in with principles already fixed, with the public sentiments, or with the sentiments of a party already engaged on the side the miracle supports, which would not be attempted to be produced in the face of enemies, in opposition to reigning tenets or favourite prejudices, or when, if they be believed, the belief must draw men away from their preconceived and habitual opinions, from their modes of life and rules of action. In the former case, men may not only receive a miraculous account, but may both act and suffer on the side, and in the cause, which the miracle supports, yet not act or suffer for the miracle, but in pursuance of a prior persuasion. The miracle, like any other argument which only confirms what was before believed, is admitted with little examination. In the moral, as in the natural world, it is *change* which requires a cause. Men are easily fortified in their old opinions, driven from them with great difficulty. Now how does this apply to the Christian history? The miracles, there recorded, were wrought in the midst of enemies, under a government, a priesthood, and a magistracy, decidedly and vehemently adverse to them, and to the pretensions which they supported. They were Protestant miracles in a Popish country; they were Popish miracles in the midst of Protestants. They produced a change; they established a society upon the spot, adhering to the belief of them; they made converts; and those who were converted gave up to the testimony their most fixed opinions and most favourite prejudices. They who acted and suffered in the cause, acted and suffered *for* the miracles: for there was no anterior persuasion to induce them, no prior reverence, prejudice, or partiality, to take hold of. Jesus had not one follower when he set up his claim. His miracles gave birth to his sect. No part of this description belongs to the ordinary evidence of Heathen or Popish miracles. Even most of the miracles alleged to have been performed by Christians, in the second and third century of its era, want this confirmation. It constitutes indeed a

line of partition between the *origin* and the *progress* of Christianity. Frauds and fallacies might mix themselves with the progress, which could not possibly take place in the commencement of the religion; at least, according to any laws of human conduct that we are acquainted with. What should suggest to the first propagators of Christianity, especially to fishermen, tax-gatherers, and husbandmen, such a thought as that of changing the religion of the world; what could bear them through the difficulties in which the attempt engaged them; what could procure any degree of success to the attempt; are questions which apply, with great force, to the setting out of the institution, with less, to every future stage of it.

To hear some men talk, one would suppose the setting up of a religion by miracles to be a thing of every day's experience; whereas the whole current of history is against it. Hath any founder of a new sect amongst Christians pretended to miraculous powers, and succeeded by his pretensions? "Were these powers claimed or exercised by the founders of the sects of the Waldenses and Albigenses? Did Wickliffe in England pretend to it? Did Huss or Jerome in Bohemia? Did Luther in Germany, Zuinglius in Switzerland, Calvin in France, or any of the reformers, advance this plea?"* The French prophets, in the beginning of the present century,† ventured to allege miraculous evidence, and immediately ruined their cause by their temerity. "Concerning the religion of ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, of China, a single miracle cannot be named, that was ever offered as a test of any of those religions *before* their establishment."‡

We may add to what has been observed of the distinction which we are considering, that, where miracles are alleged merely in affirmance of a prior opinion, they who believe the doctrine may sometimes propagate a belief of the miracles which they do not themselves entertain. This is the case of what are called *pious* frauds, but it is a case, I apprehend, which takes place solely in support of a persuasion already established. At least it does not hold of the apostolical history. If the apostles did not believe the miracles, they did not believe the religion; and, without this belief, where was the *piety*, what place was there for any thing which could bear the name or colour of piety, in publishing and attesting miracles in its behalf? If it be said that many promote the belief of revelation, and of any accounts which favour that belief, because they think them, whether well or ill founded, of public and political utility; I answer, that if a character exist, which can with less justice than another be ascribed to the founders of the Christian religion; it is that of politicians, or of men capable of entertaining political views. The truth is, that there is no assignable character which will account for the conduct of the apostles, supposing their story to be false. If bad men, what could have induced them to take such pains to promote virtue? If good men, they would not have gone about the country with a string of lies in their mouths.

IN APPRECIATING the credit of any miraculous story, these are

* Campbell on Miracles, p. 120. ed. 1766.
† The eighteenth. ‡ Adams on Mir. p. 75.

distinctions which relate to the evidence. There are other distinctions, of great moment in the question, which relate to the miracles themselves. Of which latter kind the following ought carefully to be retained.

I. It is not necessary to admit as a miracle, what can be resolved into a *false perception*. Of this nature was the demon of Socrates; the visions of Saint Anthony, and of many others; the vision which Lord Herbert of Cherbury describes himself to have seen; Colonel Gardiner's vision, as related in his life, written by Dr. Doddridge. All these may be accounted for by a momentary insanity; for the characteristic symptom of human madness is the rising up in the mind of images not distinguishable by the patient from impressions upon the senses.* The cases, however, in which the possibility of this delusion exists, are divided from the cases in which it does not exist, by many, and those not obscure marks. They are, for the most part, cases of visions or voices. The object is hardly ever touched. The vision submits not to be handled. One sense does not confirm another. They are likewise almost always cases of a *solitary* witness. It is in the highest degree improbable, and I know not, indeed, whether it hath ever been the fact, that the same derangement of the mental organs should seize different persons at the same time; a derangement, I mean, so much the same, as to represent to their imagination the same objects. Lastly, these are always cases of *momentary* miracles: by which term I mean to denote miracles, of which the whole existence is of short duration, in contradistinction to miracles which are attended with permanent effects. The appearance of a spectre, the hearing of a supernatural sound, is a momentary miracle. The sensible proof is gone, when the apparition or sound is over. But if a person born blind be restored to sight, a notorious cripple to the use of his limbs, or a dead man to life, here is a permanent effect produced by supernatural means. The change indeed was instantaneous, but the proof continues. The subject of the miracle remains. The man cured or restored is there: his former condition was known, and his present condition may be examined. This can by no possibility be resolved into false perception; and of this kind are by far the greater part of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, he did not merely move, and speak, and die again; or come out of the grave, and vanish away. He returned to his home and family, and there continued; for we find him, some time afterward in the same town, sitting at table with Jesus and his sisters; visited by great multitudes of the Jews, as a subject of curiosity; giving by his presence so much uneasiness to the Jewish rulers as to beget in them a design of destroying him.† No delusion can account for this. The French prophets in England, some time since, gave out that one of their teachers would come to life again; but their enthusiasm never made them believe that they actually saw him alive. The blind man, whose restoration to sight at Jerusalem is recorded in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel, did not quit the place or conceal himself from inquiry. On the contrary, he was forthcoming, to answer the call, to

* Batty on Lunacy. † John xii. 1, 2, 9, 10.

satisfy the scrutiny, and to sustain the brow-beating of Christ's angry and powerful enemies. When the cripple at the gate of the temple was suddenly cured by Peter,* he did not immediately relapse into his former lameness, or disappear out of the city; but boldly and honestly produced himself along with the apostles, when they were brought the next day before the Jewish council.† Here, though the miracle was sudden, the proof was permanent. The lameness had been notorious. The cure continued. This, therefore, could not be the effect of any momentary delirium, either in the subject or in the witnesses of the transaction. It is the same with the greatest number of the Scripture miracles. There are other cases of a *mixed* nature, in which, although the principal miracle be momentary, some circumstance combined with it is permanent. Of this kind is the history of St. Paul's conversion.‡ The sudden light and sound, the vision and the voice, upon the road to Damascus, were momentary; but Paul's blindness for three days in consequence of what had happened; the communication made to Ananias in another place, and by a vision independent of the former; Ananias finding out Paul in consequence of intelligence so received, and finding him in the condition described, and Paul's recovery of his sight upon Ananias's laying his hands upon him, are circumstances, which take the transaction, and the principal miracle as included in it, entirely out of the case of momentary miracles, or of such as may be accounted for by false perceptions. Exactly the same thing may be observed of Peter's vision preparatory to the call of Cornelius, and of its connexion with what was imparted in a distant place to Cornelius himself, and with the message despatched by Cornelius to Peter. The vision might be a dream; the message could not. Either communication taken separately, might be a delusion; the concurrence of the two was impossible to happen without a supernatural cause.

Beside the risk of delusion which attaches upon momentary miracles, there is also much more room for *imposture*. The account cannot be examined at the moment; and, when that is also a moment of hurry and confusion, it may not be difficult for men of influence to gain credit to any story which they may wish to have believed. This is precisely the case of one of the best attested of the miracles of Old Rome, the appearance of Castor and Pollux in the battle fought by Posthumius with the Latins at the Lake Regillus. There is no doubt but that Posthumius after the battle, spread the report of such an appearance. No person could deny it whilst it was said to last. No person, perhaps, had any inclination to dispute it afterward; or, if they had, could say with positiveness, what was or was not seen, by some or other of the army, in the dismay and amidst the tumult of a battle.

In assigning false perceptions as the origin to which some miraculous accounts may be referred, I have not mentioned claims to inspiration, illuminations, secret notices or directions, internal sensations, or consciousness of being acted upon by spiritual influences, good or bad; because these, appealing to no external proof, however convincing they may be to the persons themselves, form no part of what can be

* Acts iii. 2. † Ib. iv. 14. ‡ Ib. ix.

accounted miraculous evidence. Their own credibility stands upon their alliance with other miracles. The discussion, therefore, of all such pretensions may be omitted.

II. It is not necessary to bring into the comparison what may be called *tentative* miracles: that is, where, out of a great number of trials, some succeeded; and in the accounts of which, although the narrative of the successful cases be alone preserved, and that of the unsuccessful cases sunk, yet enough is stated to shew that the cases produced are only a few out of many in which the same means have been employed. This observation bears, with considerable force, upon the ancient oracles and auguries, in which a single coincidence of the event with the prediction is talked of and magnified, whilst failures are forgotten, or suppressed, or accounted for. It is also applicable to the cures wrought by relics, and at the tombs of saints. The boasted efficacy of the king's touch, upon which Mr. Hume lays some stress, falls under the same description. Nothing is alleged concerning it, which is not alleged of various nostrums, namely, out of many thousands who have used them, certified proofs of a few who have recovered after them. No solution of this sort is applicable to the miracles of the Gospel. There is nothing in the narrative, which can induce, or even allow, us to believe, that Christ attempted cures in many instances, and succeeded in a few; or that he ever made the attempt in vain. He did not profess to heal every where all that were sick; on the contrary, he told the Jews, evidently meaning to represent his own case, that, "although many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land, yet unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow;" and that, "many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."* By which examples he gave them to understand, that it was not the nature of a divine interposition, or necessary to its purpose, to be general; still less to answer every challenge that might be made, which would teach men to put their faith upon these experiments. Christ never pronounced the word, but the effect followed.† It was not a thousand sick that received his benediction, and a few that were benefited: a single paralytic is let down in his bed at Jesus's feet, in the midst of a surrounding multitude; Jesus bid him walk, and he did so.‡ A man with a withered hand is in the synagogue; Jesus bid him stretch forth his hand, in the presence of the assembly,

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* Luke iv. 25.

† One, and only one, instance may be produced in which the *disciples* of Christ do seem to have attempted a cure, and not to have been able to perform it. The story is very ingeniously related by three of the evangelists.* The patient was afterwards healed by Christ himself; and the whole transaction seems to have been intended, as it was well suited, to display the superiority of Christ above all who performed miracles in his name, a distinction which, during his presence in the world, it might be necessary to inculcate by some such proof as this.

‡ Mark ii. 3.

* Matt. xvii. 14. Mark, ix. 14. Luke, ix. 33.

and it was "restored whole like the other."* There was nothing tentative in these cures; nothing that can be explained by the power of accident.

We may observe also, that many of the cures which Christ wrought, such as that of a person blind from his birth, also many miracles beside cures, as raising the dead, walking upon the sea, feeding a great multitude with a few loaves and fishes, are of a nature which does not in any wise admit of the supposition of a fortunate experiment.

III. We may dismiss from the question all accounts in which, allowing the phenomenon to be real, the fact to be true, it still remains *doubtful* whether a miracle were wrought. This is the case with the ancient history of what is called the thundering legion, of the extraordinary circumstances which obstructed the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem by Julian, the circling of the flames and fragrant smell at the martyrdom of Polycarp, the sudden shower that extinguished the fire into which the Scriptures were thrown in the Diocletian persecution; Constantine's dream; his inscribing in consequence of it the cross upon his standard and the shields of his soldiers; his victory, and the escape of the standard-bearer; perhaps also the imagined appearance of the cross in the heavens, though this last circumstance is very deficient in historical evidence. It is also the case with the modern annual exhibition of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples. It is a doubt likewise, which ought to be excluded by very special circumstances, from these narratives which relate to the supernatural cure of hypochondriacal and nervous complaints, and of all diseases which are much affected by the imagination. The miracles of the second and third century are, usually, healing the sick, and casting out evil spirits, miracles in which there is room for some error and deception. We hear nothing of causing the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the lepers to be cleansed.† There are also instances in Christian writers, of reputed miracles, which were natural operations, though not known to be such at the time; as that articulate speech after the loss of a great part of the tongue.

IV. To the same head of objection nearly, may also be referred accounts, in which the variation of a small circumstance may have transformed some extraordinary appearance, or some critical coincidence of events, into a miracle; stories, in a word, which may be resolved into exaggeration. The miracles of the Gospel can by no possibility be explained away in this manner. Total fiction will account for any thing; but no stretch of exaggeration that has any parrallel in other histories, no force of fancy upon real circumstances, could produce the narratives which we now have. The feeding of the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes surpasses all bounds of exaggeration. The raising of Lazarus, of the widow's son at Nain, as well as many of the cures which Christ wrought, come not within the compass of misrepresentation. I mean, that it is impossible to assign any position of circumstances however peculiar, any accidental effects however extraordinary, any natural singularity, which could supply an origin or foundation to these accounts.

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* Matt. xii. 10. † Jortin's Remarks, vol. ii. p. 51.

Having thus enumerated several exceptions, which may justly be taken to relations of miracles, it is necessary when we read the Scriptures, to bear in our minds this general remark; that, although there be miracles recorded in the New Testament, which fall within some or other of the exceptions here assigned, yet that they are united with others, to which none of the same exceptions extend, and that their credibility stands upon this union. Thus the visions and revelations which Saint Paul asserts to have been imparted to him, may not, in their separate evidence, be distinguishable from the visions and revelations which many others have alleged. But here is the difference. Saint Paul's pretensions were attested by external miracles wrought by himself, and by miracles wrought in the cause to which these visions relate; or, to speak more properly, the same historical authority which informs us of one, informs us of the other. This is not ordinarily true of the visions of enthusiasts, or even of the accounts in which they are contained. Again, some of Christ's own miracles were *momentary;* as the transfiguration, the appearance and voice from Heaven at his baptism, a voice from the clouds on one occasion afterward, (John xii. 28.) and some others. It is not denied, that the distinction which we have proposed concerning miracles of this species, applies, in diminution of the force of the evidence, as much to these instances as to others. But this is the case, not with all the miracles ascribed to Christ, nor with the greatest part, nor with many. Whatever force therefore there may be in the objection, we have numerous miracles which are free from it; and even these to which it is applicable, are little affected by it in their credit, because there are few who, admitting the rest, will reject *them.* If there be miracles of the New Testament, which come within any of the *other* heads into which we have distributed the objections the same remark must be repeated. And this is one way, in which the unexampled number and variety of the miracles ascribed to Christ strengthens the credibility of Christianity. For it precludes any solution, or conjecture about a solution, which imagination, or even which experience, might suggest concerning some particular miracles, if considered independently of others. The miracles of Christ were of various kinds,* and performed in great varieties of situation, form, and manner; at Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Jewish nation and religion; in different parts of Judea and Galilee; in cities and villages; in synagogues, in private houses; in the street, in highways; with preparation, as in the case of Lazarus: by accident, as in the case of the widow's son at Nain; when attended by multitudes, and when alone with the patient; in the midst of his disciples, and in the presence of his enemies; with the common people around him, and before Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the synagogues.

* Not only healing every species of disease, but turning water into wine (John ii.); feeding multitudes with a few loaves and fishes (Matt. xiv. 15; Mark vi. 35; Luke ix. 12.; John vi. 5.); walking on the sea (Matt. xiv. 25); calming a storm (Matt. viii. 26; Luke viii. 24.); a celestial voice at his baptism, and miraculous appearance (Matt. iii. 16; afterward John xii. 28.); his transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1—8; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 28; 2 Peter i. 16, 17.); raising the dead in three distinct instances (Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 41; Luke vii. 14; John v[i].)

I apprehend that, when we remove from the comparison, the cases which are fairly disposed of by the observations that have been stated, many cases will not remain. To those which do remain, we apply this final distinction; "that there is not satisfactory evidence, that persons, pretending to be original witnesses of the miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undertaken and undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and properly in consequence of their belief of the truth of those accounts.

CHAPTER II.

BUT they, with whom we argue, have undoubtedly a right to select their own examples. The instances with which Mr. Hume has chosen to confront the miracles of the New Testament, and which, therefore, we are entitled to regard as the strongest which the history of the world could supply to the inquiries of a very acute and learned adversary, are the three following:

I. The cure of a blind and of a lame man of Alexandria, by the emperor Vespasian, as related by Tacitus;

II. The restoration of the limb of an attendant in a Spanish church, as told by cardinal de Retz; and,

III. The cures said to be performed at the tomb of the abbé Paris, in the early part of the present century.

I. The narrative of Tacitus is delivered in these terms: One of the common people of Alexandria, known to be diseased in his eyes, by the admonition of the god Serapis, whom that superstitious nation worship above all other gods, prostrated himself before the emperor, earnestly imploring from him a remedy for his blindness, and entreating that he would deign to anoint with his spittle his cheeks and the balls of his eyes. Another, diseased in his hand, requested, by the admonition of the same god, that he might be touched by the foot of the emperor. Vespasian at first derided and despised their application; afterward, when they continued to urge their petitions, he sometimes appeared to dread the imputation of vanity; at other times, by the earnest supplication of the patients, and the persuasion of his flatterers, to be induced to hope for success. At length he commanded an inquiry to be made by the physicians, whether such a blindness and debility were vincible by human aid. The report of the physicians contained various points; that in the one the power of vision was not destroyed, but would return if the obstacles were removed; that in the other, the diseased joints might be restored, if a healing power were applied; that it was, perhaps, agreeable to the gods to do this; that the emperor was elected by divine assistance; lastly, that the credit of the success would be the emperor's, the ridicule of the disappointment would fall upon the patients. Vespasian, believing that every thing was in the power of his fortune, and that nothing was any longer incredible, whilst the multitude, which stood by, eagerly expected the event, with a countenance expressive of joy, executed what he was desired to do. Immediately the hand was

restored to its use, and light returned to the blind man. They who were present relate both these cures, even at this time, when there is nothing to be gained by lying.*

Now, though Tacitus wrote this account twenty-seven years after the miracle is said to have been performed, and wrote at Rome of what passed at Alexandria, and wrote also from report: and although it does not appear that he had examined the story, or that he believed it (but rather the contrary), yet I think his testimony sufficient to prove that such a transaction took place: by which I mean, that the two men in question did apply to Vespasian; that Vespasian did touch the diseased in the manner related; and that a cure was reported to have followed the operation. But the affair labours under a strong and just suspicion, that the whole of it was a concerted imposture brought about by collusion between the patients, the physician, and the emperor. This solution is probable, because there was every thing to suggest, and every thing to facilitate, such a scheme. The miracle was calculated to confer honour upon the emperor, and upon the god Serapis. It was achieved in the midst of the emperor's flatterers and followers; in a city and amongst a populace beforehand devoted to his interest, and to the worship of the god; where it would have been treason and blasphemy together, to have contradicted the fame of the cure, or even to have questioned it. And what is very observable in the account is, that the report of the physicians is just such a report as would have been made of a case, in which no external marks of the disease existed, and which, consequently, was capable of being easily counterfeited, *viz.* that in the first of the patients, the organs of vision were not destroyed, that the weakness of the second was in his joints. The strongest circumstance in Tacitus's narration is, that the first patient was "*notus* tabe oculorum," remarked or notorious for the disease in his eyes. But this was a circumstance which might have found its way into the story in its progress from a distant country, and during an interval of thirty years; or it might be true that the malady of the eyes was notorious, yet that the nature and degree of the disease had never been ascertained; a case by no means uncommon. The emperor's reserve was easily affected; or it is possible he might not be in the secret. There does not seem to be much weight in the observation of Tacitus, that they who were present continued even then to relate the story when there was nothing to be gained by the lie. It only proves that those who had told the story for many years persisted in it. The state of mind of the witnesses and spectators *at the time*, is the point to be attended to. Still less is there of pertinency in Mr. Hume's eulogium on the cautious and penetrating genius of the historian; for it does not appear that the historian believed it. The terms in which he speaks of Serapis, the deity to whose interposition the miracle was attributed, scarcely suffer us to suppose that Tacitus thought the miracle to be real: "by the admonition of the god Serapis, whom that superstitious nation (dedita superstitionibus gens) worship above all other gods." To have brought this supposed miracle within the limits of comparison with the miracles of Christ, it ought to have appeared, that a person

* Tacit. Hist. lib. iv.

of a low and private station, in the midst of enemies, with the whole power of the country opposing him, with every one around him prejudiced or interested against his claims and character, pretended to perform these cures, and required the spectators, upon the strength of what they saw, to give up their firmest hopes and opinions, and follow *him* through a life of trial and danger: that many were so moved, as to obey his call, at the expense both of every notion in which they had been brought up, and of their ease, safety, and reputation; and that by these beginnings, a change was produced in the world, the effects of which remain to this day: a case, both in its circumstances and consequences, very unlike any thing we find in Tacitus's relation.

II. The story taken from the Memoirs of Cardinal de Retz, which is the second example alleged by Mr. Hume, is this: "In the church of Saragossa in Spain, the canons shewed me a man whose business it was to light the lamps; telling me, that he had been several years at the gate with one leg only. I saw him with two."*

It is stated by Mr. Hume, that the cardinal, who relates this story, did not believe it; and it no where appears, that he either examined the limb, or asked the patient, or indeed any one, a single question about the matter. An artificial leg, wrought with art, would be sufficient, in a place where no such contrivance had ever before been heard of, to give origin and currency to the report. The ecclesiastics of the place would, it is probable, favour the story, inasmuch as it advanced the honour of their image and church. And if *they* patronised it, no other person at Saragossa, in the middle of the last century, would care to dispute it. The story likewise coincided, not less with the wishes and preconceptions of the people, than with the interests of their ecclesiastical rulers: so that there was prejudice backed by authority, and both operating upon extreme ignorance, to account for the success of the imposture. If, as I have suggested, the contrivance of an artificial limb was then new, it would not occur to the cardinal himself to suspect it; especially under the carelessness of mind with which he heard the tale, and the little inclination he felt to scrutinize or expose its fallacy.

III. The miracles related to have been wrought at the tomb of the abbé Paris, admit in general of this solution. The patients who frequented the tomb were so affected by their devotion, their expectation, the place, the solemnity, and, above all, by the sympathy of the surrounding multitude, that many of them were thrown into violent convulsions, which convulsions, in certain instances produced a removal of disorders depending upon obstruction. We shall, at this day, have the less difficulty in admitting the above account, because it is the very same thing as hath lately been experienced in the operations of animal magnetism; and the report of the French physicians upon that mysterious remedy is very applicable to the present consideration, *viz.* that the pretenders to the art, by working upon the imaginations of their patients, were frequently able to produce convulsions; that convulsions so produced, are amongst the most powerful, but, at the same time, most uncertain and unmanageable applications to the human frame which can be employed.

* Liv. iv. A. D. 1654.

Circumstances, which indicate this explication in the case of the Parisian miracles, are the following:

1. They were *tentative*. Out of many thousand sick, infirm, and diseased persons, who resorted to the tomb, the professed history of the miracles contains only nine cures.

2. The convulsions at the tomb are admitted.

3. The diseases were for the most part, of that sort which depends upon inaction and obstruction, as dropsies, palsies, and some tumours.

4. The cures were gradual; some patients attending many days, some several weeks, and some several months.

5. The cures were many of them incomplete.

6. Others were temporary."*

So that all the wonder we are called upon to account for, is, that, out of an almost innumerable multitude which resorted to the tomb for the cure of their complaints, and many of whom were there agitated by strong convulsions, a very small proportion experienced a beneficial change in their constitution, especially in the action of the nerves and glands.

Some of the cases alleged, do not require that we should have recourse to this solution. The first case in the catalogue is scarcely distinguishable from the progress of a natural recovery. It was that of a young man, who laboured under an inflammation of one eye, and had lost the sight of the other. The inflamed eye was relieved, but the blindness of the other remained. The inflammation had before been abated by medicine; and the young man, at the time of his attendance at the tomb, was using a lotion of laudanum. And what is a still more material part of the case, the inflammation after some interval returned. Another case was that of a young man who had lost his sight by the puncture of an awl, and the discharge of the aqueous humour through the wound. The sight, which had been gradually returning, was much improved during his visit to the tomb, that is, probably, in the same degree in which the discharged humour was replaced by fresh secretions. And it is observable, that these two are the only cases which, from their nature, should seem unlikely to be affected by convulsions.

In one material respect I allow that the Parisian miracles were different from those related by Tacitus, and from the Spanish miracle of the cardinal de Retz. They had not, like them, all the power and all the prejudice of the country on their side to begin with. They were alleged by one party against another, by the Jansenists against the Jesuits. These were of course opposed and examined by their adversaries. The consequence of which examination was, that many falsehoods were detected, that with something really extraordinary much fraud appeared to be mixed. And if some of the cases upon which designed misrepresentation could not be charged, were not at the time satisfactorily accounted for, it was because the efficacy of strong spasmodic affections was not then sufficiently known. Finally, the cause of Jansenism did not rise by the miracles, but sunk, although

* The reader will find these particulars verified in the detail, by the accurate inquiries of the present bishop of Sarum, in his Criterion of Miracles, p. 132, &c.

the miracles had the anterior persuasion of all the numerous adherents of that cause to set out with.

These, let us remember, are the strongest examples which the history of ages supplies. In none of them was the miracle *unequivocal;* by none of them, were established prejudices and persuasions overthrown; of none of them, did the credit make its way, in opposition to authority and power; by none of them, were many induced to commit themselves, and that in contradiction to prior opinions, to a life of mortification, danger, and sufferings; none were called upon to attest them, at the expense of their fortunes and safety.*

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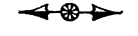
* It may be thought that the historian of the Parisian miracles, M. Montgeron, forms an exception to this last assertion. He presented his book (with a suspicion, as it should seem, of the danger of what he was doing) to the king; and was shortly afterward committed to prison, from which he never came out. Had the miracles been unequivocal, and had M. Montgeron been originally convinced by them, I should have allowed this exception. It would have stood, I think, alone, in the argument of our adversaries. But, beside what has been observed of the dubious nature of the miracles, the account which M. Montgeron has himself left of his conversion, shews both the state of his mind, and *that his persuasion was not built upon external miracles.*—"Scarcely had he entered the churchyard, when he was struck (he tells us) with awe and reverence, having never before heard prayers pronounced with so much ardour and transport as he observed amongst the supplicants at the tomb. Upon this, throwing himself on his knees, resting his elbows on the tomb-stone, and covering his face with his hands, he spake the following prayer;—*O thou by whose intercession so many miracles are said to be performed, if it be true that a part of thee surviveth the grave, and that thou hast influence with the Almighty; have pity on the darkness of my understanding, and through his mercy obtain the removal of it.*" Having prayed thus, "many thoughts (as he saith) began to open themselves to his mind; and so profound was his attention, that he continued on his knees four hours, not in the least disturbed by the vast crowd of surrounding supplicants. During this time, all the arguments which he ever heard or read in favour of Christianity, occurred to him with so much force, and seemed so strong and convincing, that he went home fully satisfied of the truth of religion in general, and of the holiness and power of that person, who (as he supposed) had engaged the Divine Goodness to enlighten his understanding so suddenly." Douglas's Crit. of Mir. p. 214.

PART II.

OF THE AUXILARY EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.



CHAPTER I.

PROPHECY.

ISAIAH lii. 13. liii. "Behold, my Servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men); so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider,—Who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed; For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people, was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

These words are extant in a book, purporting to contain the predictions of a writer who lived seven centuries before the Christian era.

That material part of every argument from prophecy, namely, that the words alleged were actually spoken or written before the fact to which they are applied took place, or could by any natural means be foreseen is, in the present instance, incontestable. The record comes out of the custody of adversaries. The Jews, as an ancient father well observed, are our librarians. The passage is in their copies, as well as in ours. With many attempts to explain it away, none has ever been made by them to discredit its authenticity.

And what adds to the force of the quotation is, that it is taken from a writing *declaredly prophetic;* a writing, professing to describe such future transactions and changes in the world, as were connected with the fate and interests of the Jewish nation. It is not a passage in an historical or devotional composition, which, because it turns out to be applicable to some future events, or to some future situation of affairs, is presumed to have been oracular. The words of Isaiah were delivered by him in a prophetic character, with the solemnity belonging to that character: and what he so delivered, was all along understood by the Jewish reader to refer to something that was to take place after the time of the author. The public sentiments of the Jews concerning the design of Isaiah's writings, are set forth in the book of. Ecclesiasticus;* "He saw by an excellent spirit, what should come to pass at the last, and he comforted them that mourned in Sion. He shewed what should come to pass for ever, and secret things or ever they came."

It is also an advantage which this prophecy possesses, that it is intermixed with no other subject. It is entire, separate, and uninterruptedly directed to one scene of things

The *application* of the prophecy to the evangelic history is plain, and appropriate. Here is no double sense: no figurative language but what is sufficiently intelligible to every reader of every country. The obscurities (by which I mean the expressions that require a knowledge of local diction, and of local allusion) are few, and not of great importance. Nor have I found that varieties of reading or a different construing of the original, produce any material alteration in the sense of the phophecy. Compare the common translation with that of bishop Lowth, and the difference is not considerable. So far as they do differ, bishop Lowth's corrections, which are the faithful result of an accurate examination, bring the description nearer to the New Testament history than it was before. In the fourth verse of the fifty-third chapter, what our Bible renders "stricken," he translates "judicially stricken;" and in the eighth verse, the clause, "he was taken from prison and from judgment," the bishop gives, "by an oppressive judgment he was taken off." The next words to these, "who shall declare his generation?" are much cleared up in their meaning by the bishop's version; "his manner of life who would declare?" *i. e.* who would stand forth in his defence? The former part of the ninth verse, "and he made his grave with the wicked, and

* Chap. xlviii. ver. 24.

with the rich in his death," which inverts the circumstances of Christ's passion, the bishop brings out in an order perfectly agreeable to the event; "and his grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was his tomb." The words in the eleventh verse, "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," are, in the bishop's version, "by the *knowledge of him* shall my righteous servant justify many."

It is natural to inquire what turn the Jews themselves give to this prophecy.* There is good proof that the ancient Rabbins explained it of their expected Messiah;† but their modern expositors concur, I think, in representing it as a description of the calamitous state and intended restoration of the Jewish people, who are here, as they say, exhibited under the character of a single person. I have not discovered that their exposition rests upon any critical arguments, or upon these in any other than in a very minute degree. The clause in the ninth verse, which we render "for the transgression of my people was he stricken," and in the margin, "was the stroke upon him," the Jews read, "for the transgression of my people was the stroke upon *them*." And what they allege in support of the alteration amounts only to this, that the Hebrew pronoun is capable of a plural as well as of a singular signification; that is to say, is capable of their construction as well as ours.‡ And this is all the variation contended for: the rest of the prophecy they read as we do. The probability, therefore,

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* "Vaticinium hoc Esaiæ est carnificina Rabbinorum, de quo aliqui Judæi mihi, confessi sunt, Rabbinos suos ex propheticis scripturis facilè se extricare potuisse *modò Esaias tacuisset*." Hulse, Theol. Jud. p. 318 quoted by Poole, in loc.

† Hulse, Theol. Jud. p. 430.

‡ Bishop Lowth adopts in this place the reading of the Seventy, which gives smitten *to death*, "for the transgression of my people was he smitten to death." The addition of the words "to death," makes an end of the Jewish interpretation of the clause. And the authority upon which this reading (though not given by the present Hebrew text) is adopted, Dr. Kennicot has set forth by an argument not only so cogent, but so clear and popular, that I beg leave to transcribe the substance of it into this note:—"Origen, after having quoted at large this prophecy concerning the Messiah, tells us, that, having once made use of this passage, in a dispute against some that were accounted wise among the Jews, one of them, replied that the words did not mean one man, but one people, the Jews, who were smitten of God, and dispersed among the Gentiles for their conversion; that he then urged many parts of this prophecy to shew the absurdity of this interpretation, and that he seemed to press them the hardest by this sentence,—'for the transgression of my people was he smitten to death." Now, as Origen, the author of the Hexapla, must have understood Hebrew, we cannot suppose that he would have urged this last text as so decisive, if the Greek version had not agreed here with the Hebrew text: nor that these wise Jews would have been at all distressed by this quotation, unless the Hebrew text had read agreeably to the words "to death," on which the argument principally depended; for, by quoting it immediately, they would have triumphed over him, and reprobated his Greek version. This, whenever they could do it, was their constant practice in their disputes with the Christians. Origen himself, who laboriously compared the Hebrew text with the Septuagint, has recorded the necessity of arguing with the Jews, from such passages only as were in the Septuagint agreeable to the Hebrew. Wherefore, as Origen had carefully compared the Greek version of the Septuagint with the Hebrew text; and as he puzzled and confounded the learned Jews, by urging upon them the reading "to death," in this place; it seems almost impossible not to conclude, both from Origen's argument, and the silence of his Jewish adversaries, that the Hebrew text at that time actually had the word agreeably to the version of the Seventy." Lowth's Isaiah, p. 242.

of their exposition, is a subject of which we are as capable of judging as themselves. This judgment is open indeed to the good sense of every attentive reader. The application which the Jews contend for, appears to me to labour under insuperable difficulties; in particular, it may be demanded of them to explain, in *whose* name or person, if the Jewish people be the sufferer, does the prophet speak, when he says, "He hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows, yet *we* did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; but he was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities, the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him, and with his stripes *we* are healed." Again, the description in the seventh verse, "he was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth;" he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;" quadrates with no part of the Jewish history with which we are acquainted. The mention of the "grave," and the "tomb," in the ninth verse, is not very applicable to the fortunes of a nation; and still less so is the conclusion of the prophecy in the twelfth verse, which expressly represents the sufferings as *voluntary*, and the sufferer as interceding for the offenders; "because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

There are other prophecies of the Old Testament, interpreted by Christians to relate to the Gospel history, which are deserving both of great regard, and of a very attentive consideration: but I content myself with stating the above, as well because I think it the clearest and the strongest of all, as because most of the rest, in order that their value might be represented with any tolerable degree of fidelity, require a discussion unsuitable to the limits and nature of this work. The reader will find them disposed in order, and distinctly explained, in bishop Chandler's treatise on the subject; and he will bear in mind, what has been often, and, I think, truly, urged by the advocates of Christianity, that there is no other eminent person, to the history of whose life so many circumstances can be made to apply. They who object that much has been done by the power of chance, the ingenuity of accommodation, and the industry of research, ought to try whether the same, or any thing like it, could be done, if Mahomet, or any other person, were proposed as the subject of Jewish prophecy.

II. A second head of argument from prophecy, is founded upon our Lord's predictions concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, recorded by three out of the four evangelists.

Luke xxi. 5—25. "And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be; and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near, go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions; be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by-and-by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and great earth-

quakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences; and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before, what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out: and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days: for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

In terms nearly similar, this discourse is related in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and the thirteenth of Mark. The prospect of the same evils drew from our Saviour, on another occasion, the following affecting expressions of concern, which are preserved by Saint Luke (xix. 41—44.): "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."—These passages are direct and explicit predictions. References to the same event, some plain, some parabolical, or otherwise figurative, are found in divers other discourses of our Lord.*

The general agreement of the description with the event, viz. with the ruin of the Jewish nation, and the capture of Jerusalem under Vespasian, thirty-six years after Christ's death, is most evident; and the accordancy in various articles of detail and circumstances has been shewn by many learned writers. It is also an advantage to the inquiry, and to the argument built upon it, that we have received a copious account of the transaction from Josephus, a Jewish and contemporary historian. This part of the case is perfectly free from

* Matt. xxi. 33—46. xxii. 1—7. Mark xii. 1—12. Luke xiii. 1—9. xx. 9—20. xxi. 5—13.

doubt. The only question which, in my opinion, can be raised upon the subject, is whether the prophecy was really delivered *before* the event; I shall apply, therefore, my observations to this point solely.

1. The judgment of antiquity, though varying in the precise year of the publication of the three Gospels, *concurs* in assigning them a date prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.*

2. This judgment is confirmed by a strong probability arising from the course of human life. The destruction of Jerusalem took place in the seventieth year after the birth of Christ. The three evangelists, one of whom was his immediate companion, and the other two associated with his companions, were, it is probable, not much younger than he was. They must, consequently, have been far advanced in life when Jerusalem was taken; and no reason has been given why they should defer writing their histories so long.

3. † If the Evangelists, at the time of writing the Gospels, had known of the destruction of Jerusalem, by which catastrophe the prophecies were plainly fulfilled, it is most probable, that, in recording the predictions, they would have dropped some word or other about the completion; in like manner as Luke, after relating the denunciation of a dearth by Agabus, adds, "which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar:"‡ whereas the prophecies are given distinctly in one chapter of each of the first three Gospels, and referred to in several different passages of each, and, in none of all these places, does there appear the smallest intimation that the things spoken of had come to pass. I do admit, that it would have been the part of an impostor, who wished his readers to believe that his book was written before the event, when in truth it was written after it, to have suppressed any such intimation carefully. But this was not the character of the authors of the Gospel. Cunning was no quality of theirs. Of all writers in the world, they thought the least of providing against objections. Moreover, there is no clause in any one of them, that makes a profession of their having written prior to the Jewish wars, which a fraudulent purpose would have led them to pretend. They have done neither one thing nor the other: they have neither inserted any words which might signify to the reader that their accounts were written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, which a sophist would have done; nor have they dropped a hint of the completion of the prophecies recorded by them, which an *undesigning* writer, writing *after* the event, could hardly, on some or other of the many occasions that presented themselves, have missed of doing.

4. The admonitions§ which Christ is represented to have given

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* Lardner, vol. xiii.

† Le Clerc, Diss. III. de Quat. Evang. num. vii. p. 541.

‡ Acts xi. 28.

§ "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh, then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; then let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto." Luke xxi. 20, 21.

"When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains; let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes." Matt. xxiv. 18.

to his followers to save themselves by flight, are not easily accounted for, on the supposition of the prophecy being fabricated after the event. Either the Christians, when the siege approached, did make their escape from Jerusalem, or they did not: if they did, they must have had the prophecy amongst them. If they did not know of any such prediction at the time of the siege, if they did not take notice of any such warning, it was an improbable fiction, in a writer publishing his work near to that time (which, on any even the lowest and most disadvantageous supposition, was the case with the Gospels now in our hands), and addressing his work to Jews and to Jewish converts (which Matthew certainly did), to state that the followers of Christ had received admonition, of which they made no use when the occasion arrived, and of which experience then recent proved, that those, who were most concerned to know and regard them, were ignorant or negligent. Even if the prophecies came to the hands of the evangelists through no better vehicle than tradition, it must have been by a tradition which subsisted prior to the event. And to suppose that, without any authority whatever, without so much as even any tradition to guide them, they had forged these passages, is to impute to them a degree of fraud and imposture, from every appearance of which their compositions are as far removed as possible.

5. I think that, if the prophecies had been composed after the event, there would have been more specification. The names or descriptions of the enemy, the general, the emperor would have been found in them. The designation of the time would have been more determinate. And I am fortified in this opinion by observing, that the counterfeited prophecies of the Sibylline oracles, of the twelve patriarchs, and I am inclined to believe, most others of the kind, are mere transcripts of the history, moulded into a prophetic form.

It is objected, that the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is mixed, or connected, with expressions which relate to the final judgment of the world; and so connected, as to lead an ordinary reader to expect, that these two events would not be far distant from each other. To which I answer, that the objection does not concern our present argument. If our saviour actually foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, it is sufficient; even although we should allow, that the narration of the prophecy, had combined what had been said by him on kindred subjects, without accurately preserving the order, or always noticing the transition of the discourse.

CHAPTER II.

The morality of the Gospel.

IN stating the morality of the Gospel as an argument of its truth, I am willing to admit two points; first, that the teaching of morality was not the primary design of the mission; secondly, that morality, neither in the Gospel, nor in any other book, can be a subject, properly speaking, of discovery.

If I were to describe in a very few words the scope of Christianity,

as a *revelation*,* I should say, that it was to influence the conduct of human life, by establishing the proof of a future state of reward and punishment,—"to bring life and immortality to light." The direct object, therefore, of the design, is to supply motives, and not rules; sanctions, and not precepts. And these were what mankind stood most in need of. The members of civilized society can, in all ordinary cases, judge tolerably well how they ought to act: but without a future state, or, which is the same thing, without credited evidence of that state, they want a *motive* to their duty; they want at least strength of motive, sufficient to bear up against the force of passion, and the temptation of present advantage. Their rules want authority. The most important service that can be rendered to human life, and that consequently, which, one might expect beforehand, would be the great end and office of a revelation from God, is to convey to the world authorized assurances of the reality of a future existence. And although in doing this, or by the ministry of the same person by whom this is done, moral precepts or examples, or illustrations of moral precepts, may be occasionally given, and be highly valuable, yet still they do not form the original purpose of the mission.

Secondly, morality, neither in the Gospel, nor in any other book, can be a subject of discovery, properly so called. By which proposition, I mean that there cannot, in morality, be any thing similar to what are called discoveries in natural philosophy, in the arts of life, and in some sciences; as the system of the universe, the circulation of the blood, the polarity of the magnet, the laws of gravitation, alphabetical writing, decimal arithmetic, and some other things of the same sort; facts, or proofs, or contrivances, before totally unknown and unthought of. Whoever, therefore, expects, in reading the New Testament, to be struck with discoveries in morals in the manner in which his mind was affected when he first came to the knowledge of the discoveries above-mentioned; or rather in the manner in which the world was affected by them, when they were first published; expects what, as I apprehend, the nature of the subject renders it impossible that he should meet with. And the foundation of my opinion is this, that the qualities of actions depend entirely upon their effects, which effects must all along have been the subject of human experience.

When it is once settled, no matter upon what principle, that to do good is virtue, the rest is calculation. But since the calculation cannot be instituted concerning each particular action, we establish intermediate rules; by which proceeding, the business of morality is much facilita-

* Great and inestimably beneficial effects may accrue from the mission of Christ, and especially from his death, which do not belong to Christianity as a *revelation*; that is, they might have existed, and they might have been accomplished, though we had never, in this life, been made acquainted with them. These effects may be very extensive; they may be interesting even to other orders of intelligent beings. I think it is a general opinion, and one to which I have long come, that the beneficial effects of Christ's death extend to the whole human species. It was the redemption of *the world*. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world;" 1 John ii. 2. Probably the future happiness, perhaps the future existence of the species, and more gracious terms of acceptance extended *to all*, might depend upon it, or be procured by it. Now these effects, whatever they be, do not belong to Christianity as a *revelation*; because they exist with respect to those to whom *it is not revealed*.

ted, for then it is concerning our rules alone that we need inquire, whether in their tendency they be beneficial; concerning our actions, we have only to ask, whether they be agreeable to the rules. We refer actions to rules, and rules to public happiness. Now, in the formation of these rules, there is no place for discovery, properly so called, but there is ample room for the exercise of wisdom, judgment, and prudence.

As I wish to deliver argument rather than panegyric, I shall treat of the morality of the Gospel, in subjection to these observations. And after all, I think it such a morality, as, considering from whom it came, is most extraordinary; and such as, without allowing some degree of reality to the character and pretensions of the religion, it is difficult to account for: or, to place the argument a little lower in the scale, it is such a morality as completely repels the supposition of its being the tradition of a barbarous age or of a barbarous people, of the religion being founded in folly, or of its being the production of craft; and it repels also, in a great degree, the supposition of its having been the effusion of an enthusiastic mind.

The division, under which the subject may be most conveniently treated, is that of the things taught, and the manner of teaching.

Under the first head, I should willingly, if the limits and nature of my work admitted of it, transcribe into this chapter the whole of what has been said upon the morality of the Gospel by the author of *The Internal Evidence of Christianity;* because it perfectly agrees with my own opinion, and because it is impossible to say the same things so well. This acute observer of human nature, and as I believe, sincere convert to Christianity, appears to me to have made out satisfactorily the two following positions, *viz.*

I. That the Gospel omits some qualities, which have usually engaged the praises and admiration of mankind, but which, in reality, and in their general effects, have been prejudicial to human happiness.

II. That the Gospel has brought forward some virtues, which possess the highest intrinsic value, but which have commonly been overlooked and contemned.

The first of these propositions he exemplifies in the instances of friendship, patriotism, active courage, in the sense in which these qualities are usually understood, and in the conduct which they often produce.

The second, in the instances of passive courage or endurance of sufferings, patience under affronts and injuries, humility, irresistance, placability.

The truth is, there are two opposite descriptions of character, under which mankind may generally be classed. The one possesses vigour, firmness, resolution; is daring and active, quick in its sensibilities, jealous of its fame, eager in its attachments, inflexible in its purpose, violent in its resentments.

The other, meek, yielding, complying, forgiving; not prompt to act, but willing to suffer; silent and gentle under rudeness and insult, suing for reconciliation where others would demand satisfaction, giving way to the pushes of impudence, conceding and indulgent to the prejudices, the wrongheadedness, the intractability, of those with whom it has to deal.

The former of these characters is, and ever hath been, the favourite of the world. It is the character of great men. There is a dignity in it which universally commands respect.

The latter is poor-spirited, tame, and abject. Yet so it hath happened, that, with the Founder of Christianity, this latter is the subject of his commendation, his precepts, his example; and that the former is so, in no part of its composition. This and nothing else, is the character designed in the following remarkable passages: "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also: and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also: and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain: love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." This certainly is not common-place morality. It is very original. It shews at least (and it is for this purpose we produce it) that no two things can be more different than the Heroic and the Christian character.

Now, the author, to whom I refer, has not only marked this difference more strongly than any preceding writer, but has proved, in contradiction to first impressions, to popular opinion, to the encomiums of orators and poets, and even to the suffrages of historians, and moralists, that the latter character possesses the most of true worth, both as being most difficult either to be acquired or sustained, and as contributing most to the happiness and tranquillity of social life. The state of his argument is as follows:

I. If this disposition were universal, the case is clear; the world would be a society of friends. Whereas, if the other disposition were universal, it would produce a scene of universal contention. The world could not hold a generation of such men.

II. If, what is the fact, the disposition be partial; if a few be actuated by it, amongst a multitude who are not; in whatever degree it does prevail, in the same proportion it prevents, allays, and terminates, quarrels, the great disturbers of human happiness, and the great sources of human misery, so far as man's happiness and misery depend upon man. Without this disposition, enmities must not only be frequent, but, once begun, must be eternal: for, each retaliation being a fresh injury, and, consequently requiring a fresh *satisfaction*, no period can be assigned to the reciprocation of affronts, and to the progress of hatred, but that which closes the lives, or at least the intercourse, of the parties.

I would only add to these observations, that although the former of the two characters above described may be occasionally useful; although, perhaps, a great general, or a great statesman, may be formed by it, and these may be instruments of important benefits to mankind, yet is this nothing more than what is true of many qualities which are acknowledged to be vicious. *Envy* is a quality of this sort; I know not a stronger stimulus to exertion; many a scholar, many an artist, many a soldier, has been produced by it; nevertheless, since in its general effects it is noxious, it is properly condemned, certainly is not praised, by sober moralists.

It was a portion of the same character as that we are defending, or rather of his love of the same character, which our Saviour displayed

in his repeated correction of the ambition of his disciples; his frequent admonitions, that greatness with them was to consist in humility; his censure of that love of distinction, and greediness of superiority, which the chief persons amongst his countrymen were wont, on all occasions, great and little to betray. "They (the Scribes and Pharisees) love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven; neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ; but he that is greatest among *you*, shall be your servant: and whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted."* I make no farther remark upon these passages, (because they are, in truth, only a repetition of the doctrine, different expressions of the principle, which we have already stated), except that some of the passages, especially our Lord's advice to the guests at an entertainment,† seem to extend the rule to what we call *manners;* which was both regular in point of consistency, and not so much beneath the dignity of our Lord's mission as may at first sight be supposed, for bad manners are bad morals.

It is sufficiently apparent, that the precepts we have cited, or rather the disposition which these precepts inculcate, relate to personal conduct from personal motives; to cases in which men act from impulse, for themselves, and from themselves. When it comes to be considered, what is necessary to be done for the sake of the public, and out of a regard to the general welfare (which consideration, for the most part, ought exclusively to govern the duties of men in public stations), it comes to a case to which the rules do not belong. This distinction is plain; and if it were less so, the consequence would not be much felt: for it is very seldom that, in the intercourse of private life, men act with public views. The personal motives, from which they do act, the rule regulates.

The preference of the patient to the heroic character, which we have here noticed, and which the reader will find explained at large, in the work to which we have referred him, is a peculiarity in the Christian institution, which I propose as an argument of wisdom very much beyond the situation and natural character of the person who delivered it.

II. A *second* argument, drawn from the morality of the New Testament, is the stress which is laid by our Saviour upon the regulation of the thoughts. And I place this consideration next to the other, because they are connected. The other related to the malicious passions; this, to the voluptuous. Together, they comprehend the whole character.

"Out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications," &c.—"These are the things which defile a man."‡

"Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but *within* they are

* Matt. xxiii. 6. See also Mark xii. 39. Luke xx. 46; xiv. 7.
† Luke xiv. 7. ‡ Matt. xv. 19.

full of extortion and excess.—Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness; even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but *within* ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."*

And more particularly that strong expression,† "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

There can be no doubt with any reflecting mind, but that the propensities of our nature must be subject to regulation; but the question is, *where* the check ought to be placed, upon the thought, or only upon the action? In this question, our Saviour in the texts here quoted, has pronounced a decisive judgment. He makes the control of thought essential. Internal purity with him is every thing. Now I contend that this is the only discipline which can succeed; in other words, that a moral system, which prohibits actions, but leaves the thoughts at liberty, will be ineffectual, and is therefore unwise. I know not how to go about the proof of a point, which depends upon experience, and upon a knowledge of the human constitution, better than by citing the judgment of persons, who appear to have given great attention to the subject, and to be well qualified to form a true opinion about it. Boerhaave, speaking of this very declaration of our Saviour, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart," and understanding it, as we do, to contain an injunction to lay the check upon the thoughts, was wont to say, that "our Saviour knew mankind better than Socrates." Haller, who has recorded this saying of Boerhaave, adds to it the following remarks of his own:‡ "It did not escape the observation of our Saviour that the rejection of any evil thoughts was the best defence againt vice: for when a debauched person fills his imagination with impure pictures, the licentious ideas which he recalls, fail not to stimulate his desires with a degree of violence which he cannot resist. This will be followed by gratification, unless some external obstacle should prevent him from the commission of a sin, which he had internally resolved on." "Every moment of time," says our author, "that is spent in meditations upon sin, increases the power of the dangerous object which has possessed our imagination." I suppose these reflections will be generally assented to.

III. Thirdly, Had a teacher of morality been asked concerning a general principle of conduct, and for a short rule of life; and had he instructed the person who consulted him, "constantly to refer his actions to what he believed to be the will of his Creator, and constantly to have in view, not his own interest and gratification alone, but the happiness and comfort of those about him," he would have been thought, I doubt not, in any age of the world, and in any, even the most improved, state of morals, to have delivered a judicious answer; because, by the first direction, he suggested the only motive which acts steadily and uniformly, in sight and out of sight, in familiar occurrences and under pressing temptations; and in the second,

* Matt. xxiii. 25, 27. † Ib. v. 28.

‡ Letters to his Daughter.

he corrected, what, of all tendencies in the human character, stands most in need of correction, *selfishness*, or a contempt of other men's conveniency and satisfaction. In estimating the value of a moral rule, we are to have regard not only to the particular duty, but the general spirit; not only to what it directs us to do, but to the character which a compliance with its direction is likely to form in us. So, in the present instance, the rule here recited will never fail to make him who obeys it *considerate*, not only of the rights, but of the feelings of other men bodily and mental, in great matters and in small; of the ease, the accommodation, the self-complacency, of all with whom he has any concern, especially of all who are in his power, or dependant upon his will.

Now what, in the most applauded philosopher of the most enlightened age of the world, would have been deemed worthy of his wisdom, and of his character, to say, our Saviour hath said, and upon just such an occasion as that which we have feigned.

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself: on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

The second precept occurs in Saint Matthew (xix. 16.) on another occasion similar to this; and both of them, on a third similar occasion, in Luke (x. 27.) In these two latter instances, the question proposed was, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Upon all these occasions, I consider the words of our Saviour as expressing precisely the same thing as what I have put into the mouth of the moral philosopher. Nor do I think that it detracts much from the merit of the answer, that these precepts are extant in the Mosaic code: for his laying his finger, if I may so say, upon these precepts; his drawing them out from the rest of that voluminous institution; his stating of them, not simply amongst the number, but as the greatest and the sum of all the others; in a word, his proposing of them to his hearers for their rule and principle, was our Saviour's own.

And what our Saviour hath said upon the subject, appears to me to have *fixed* the sentiment amongst his followers.

Saint Paul has it expressly, "If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;"† and again, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."‡

Saint John, in like manner, "This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."§

Saint Peter, not very differently: "Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently"‖

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* Matt. xxii. 35—40. † Rom. xiii. 9. ‡ Gal. v. 14.
§ 1 John iv. 21. ‖ 1 Peter i. 22.

And it is so well known, as to require no citation to verify it, that this love, or charity, or, in other words, regard to the welfare of others, runs in various forms through all the preceptive parts of the apostolic writings. It is the theme of all their exhortations, that with which their morality begins and ends, from which all their details and enumerations set out, and into which they return.

And that this temper, for some time at least, descended in its purity to succeeding Christians, is attested by one of the earliest and best of the remaining writings of the apostolical fathers, the epistle of the Roman Clement. The meekness of the Christian character reigns throughout the whole of that excellent piece. The occasion called for it. It was to compose the dissensions of the church of Corinth. And the venerable hearer of the apostles does not fall short, in the display of this principle, of the finest passages of their writings. He calls to the remembrance of the Corinthian church its former character, in which "ye were all of you," he tells them, "humble-minded, not boasting of any thing, desiring rather to be subject than to govern, to give than to receive, being content with the portion God had dispensed to you, and hearkening diligently to his word; ye were enlarged in your bowels, having his sufferings always before your eyes. Ye contended day and night for the whole brotherhood, that with compassion and a good conscience the number of his elect might be saved. Ye were sincere, and without offence, towards each other. Ye bewailed every one his neighbour's sins, esteeming their defects your own."* His prayer for them was for the "return of peace, long-suffering, and patience."† And his advice to those, who might have been the occasion of difference in the society, is conceived in the true spirit, and with a perfect knowledge, of the Christian character: "Who is there among you that is generous? who that is compassionate? who that has any charity? Let him say, If this sedition, this contention, and these schisms, be upon my account, I am ready to depart, to go away whithersoever ye please, and do whatsoever ye shall command me: only let the flock of Christ be in peace with the elders who are set over it. He that shall do this, shall get to himself a very great honour in the Lord; and there is no place but what will be ready to receive him: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. These things they, who have their conversation towards God, not to be repented of, both have done, and will be always be ready to do."‡

This sacred principle, this earnest recommendation of forbearance, lenity, and forgiveness, mixes with all the writings of that age. There are more quotations in the apostolical fathers, of texts which relate to these points, than of any other. Christ's sayings had struck them. "Not rendering," said Polycarp, the disciple of John, "evil for evil, or railing for railing, or striking for striking, or cursing for cursing."§ Again, speaking of some whose behaviour had given great offence, "Be ye moderate," says he, "on this occasion, and look not upon such as enemies, but call them back as suffering and erring members, that ye save your whole body."‖

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* Ep. Clem. Rom. c. 2; Abp. Wake's Translation. † Ib. c. 53.
‡ *Ib. c. 54.* § Pol Ep. ad Phil. c. 2. ‖ Ib. c. 11.

"Be ye mild at their anger," saith Ignatius, the companion of Polycarp, "humble at their boastings, to their blasphemies return your prayers, to their error your firmness in the faith; when they are cruel, be ye gentle; not endeavouring to imitate their ways, let us be their brethren in all kindness and moderation: but let us be followers of the Lord; for who was ever more unjustly used, more destitute, more despised?"

IV. A fourth quality, by which the morality of the Gospel is distinguished, is the exclusion of regard to fame and reputation.

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."*

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."†

And the rule, by parity of reason, is extended to all other virtues. I do not think, that either in these, or in any other passage of the New Testament, the pursuit of fame is stated as a vice; it is only said that, an action, to be virtuous, must be independent of it. I would also observe, that it is not publicity, but ostentation, which is prohibited; not the mode, but the motive, of the action which is regulated. A good man will prefer that mode, as well as those objects of his beneficence, by which he can produce the greatest effect; and the view of this purpose may dictate sometimes publication, and sometimes concealment. Either the one or the other may be the *mode* of the action, according as the end to be promoted by it appears to require. But from the *motive*, the reputation of the deed, and the fruits and advantage of that reputation to ourselves, must be shut out, or, in whatever proportion they are not so, the action in that proportion fails of being virtuous.

This exclusion of regard to human opinion, is a difference, not so much in the duties to which the teachers of virtue would persuade mankind, as in the manner and topics of persuasion. And in this view the difference is great. When *we* set about to give advice, our lectures are full of the advantages of character, of the regard that is due to appearances, and to opinion; of what the world, especially of what the good or great, will think and say; of the value of public esteem, and of the qualities by which men acquire it. Widely different from this was our Saviour's instruction; and the difference was founded upon the best reasons. For, however the care of reputation, the authority of public opinion, or even of the opinion of good men, the satisfaction of being well received and well thought of, the benefit of being known and distinguished, are topics to which we are fain to have recourse in our exhortations; the true virtue is that which discards these considerations absolutely, and which retires from them all to the single internal purpose of pleasing God. This at least was the virtue which our Saviour taught. And in teaching this, he not only confined the views of his followers to the proper measure and principle of human duty, but acted in consistency with his office as a monitor from heaven.

* Matt. vi. 1. † Matt. vi. 6.

NEXT to what our Saviour taught, may be considered the manner of his teaching, which was extremely peculiar, yet, I think, precisely adapted to the peculiarity of his character and situation. His lessons did not consist of disquisitions; of any thing like moral essays, or like sermons, or like set treatises upon the several points which he mentioned. When he delivered a precept, it was seldom that he added any proof or argument: still more seldom, that he accompanied it with, what all precepts require, limitations and distinctions. His instructions were conceived in short, emphatic, sententious rules, in occasional reflections, or in round maxims. I do not think that this was a natural, or would have been a proper method for a philosopher or a moralist; or that it is a method which can be successfully imitated by us. But I contend that it was suitable to the character which Christ assumed, and to the situation in which, as a teacher, he was placed. He produced himself as a messenger from God. He put the truth of what he taught upon authority.* In the choice, therefore, of his mode of teaching, the purpose by him to be consulted was *impression:* because conviction, which forms the principal end of our discourses, was to arise in the minds of his followers from a different source, from their respect to his person and authority. Now, for the purpose of impression singly and exclusively (I repeat again, that we are not here to consider the convincing of the understanding), I know nothing which would have so great force as strong ponderous maxims, frequently urged, and frequently brought back to the thoughts of the hearers. I know nothing that could in this view be said better, than "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you:" "The first and great commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It must also be remembered, that our Lord's ministry, upon the supposition either of one year or three, compared with his work, was of short duration; that, within this time, he had many places to visit, various audiences to address; that his person was generally besieged by crowds of followers: that he was sometimes driven away from the place where he was teaching by persecution, and at other times, thought fit to withdraw himself from the commotions of the populace. Under these circumstances, nothing appears to have been so practicable, or likely to be so efficacious, as leaving, wherever he came, concise lessons of duty. These circumstances at least shew the necessity he was under of comprising what he delivered within a small compass. In particular, his sermon upon the mount ought always to be considered with a view to these observations. The question is not, whether a fuller, a more accurate, a more systematic, or a more argumentative, discourse upon morals might not have been pronounced; but whether more could have been said in the same room, better adapted to the exigencies of the hearers, or better calculated for the purpose of impression? Seen in this light, it has always appeared to me to be admirable. Dr. Lardner thought that this discourse was made up of what Christ had said at different times, and on different occasions, several of which occasions are noticed in Saint

* "*I* say unto you, Swear not at all; *I* say unto you, Resist not evil; *I* say unto you, Love your enemies."—Matt. v. 34. 39. 44.

Luke's narrative. I can perceive no reason for this opinion. I believe that our Lord delivered this discourse at one time and place, in the manner related by Saint Matthew, and that he repeated the same rules and maxims at different times, as opportunity or occasion suggested; that they were often in his mouth and were repeated to different audiences, and in various conversations.

It is incidental to this mode of moral instruction, which proceeds not by proof but upon authority, not by disquisition but by precept, that the rules will be conceived in absolute terms, leaving the application, and the distinctions that attend it, to the reason of the hearer. It is likewise to be expected that they will be delivered in terms by so much the more forcible and energetic, as they have to encounter natural or general propensities. It is farther also to be remarked, that many of those strong instances, which appear in our Lord's sermon, such as, "If any man will smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also:" "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also;" "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain:" though they appear in the form of specific precepts, are intended as descriptive of disposition and character. A specific compliance with the precepts would be of little value, but the disposition which they inculcate is of the highest. He who should content himself with waiting for the occasion, and with literally observing the rule when the occasion offered, would do nothing, or worse than nothing: but he who considers the character and disposition which is hereby inculcated, and places that disposition before him as the model to which he should bring his own, takes, perhaps, the best possible method of improving the benevolence, and of calming and rectifying the vices, of his temper.

If it be said that this disposition is unattainable, I answer, so is all perfection: ought therefore a moralist to recommend imperfections? One excellency, however, of our Saviour's rules, is, that they are either never mistaken, or never mistaken so as to do harm. I could feign a hundred cases, in which the literal application of the rule, "of doing to others as we would that others should do unto us," might mislead us; but I never yet met with the man who was actually misled by it. Notwithstanding that our Lord bade his followers "not to resist evil," and "to forgive the enemy who should trespass against them, not till seven times, but till seventy times seven," the Christian world has hitherto suffered little by too much placability or forbearance. I would repeat once more, what has already been twice remarked, that these rules were designed to regulate personal conduct from personal motives, and for this purpose alone.

I think that these observations will assist us greatly in placing our Saviour's conduct, as a moral teacher, in a proper point of view; especially when it is considered, that to deliver moral disquisitions was no part of his design,—to teach morality at all was only a subordinate part of it; his great business being to supply, what was much more wanting than lessons of morality, stronger moral sanctions, and clearer assurances of a future judgment.*

* Some appear to require a religious system, or, in the books which profess to de-

The *parables* of the New Testament are, many of them, such as would have done honour to any book in the world; I do not mean in style and diction, but in the choice of the subjects, in the structure of the narratives, in the aptness, propriety, and force, of the circumstances woven into them; and in some, as that of the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the Pharisee and the publican, in a union of pathos and simplicity, which, in the best productions of human genius, is the fruit only of a much exercised and well cultivated judgment.

The Lord's Prayer, for a succession of solemn thoughts, for fixing the attention upon a few great points, for suitableness to every condition, for sufficiency, for conciseness without obscurity, for the weight and real importance of its petitions, is without an equal, or a rival.

From whence did these come? Whence had this man his wisdom? Was our Saviour, in fact, a well-instructed philosopher, whilst he is represented to us as an illiterate peasant? Or shall we say that some early Christians of taste and education composed these pieces and ascribed them to Christ? Beside all other incredibilities in this account, I answer, with Dr. Jortin, that they *could not* do it. No specimens of composition, which the Christians of the first century have left us, authorize us to believe that they were equal to the task. And how little qualified the Jews, the countrymen and companions of Christ, were to assist him in the undertaking, may be judged of from the traditions and writings of theirs which were the nearest to that age. The whole collection of the Talmud is one continued proof, into what follies they fell whenever they left their Bible; and how little capable they were of furnishing out such lessons as Christ delivered.

But there is still another view, in which our Lord's discourses deserve to be considered; and that is, in their *negative* character, —not in what they did but in what they did not, contain. Under this head, the following reflections appear to me to possess some weight.

They exhibit no particular description of the invisible world. The future happiness of the good, and the misery of the bad, which is all we want to be assured of, is directly and positively affirmed, and is represented by metaphors and comparisons, which were plainly intended as metaphors and comparisons, and as nothing more. As to

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liver that system, minute directions, for every case and occurrence that may arise. This say they, is necessary to render a revelation perfect, especially one which has for its object the regulation of human conduct. Now, how prolix, and yet how incomplete and unavailing, such an attempt must have been, is proved by one notable example: "The Indoo and Mussulman religion are institutes of civil law, regulating the minutest questions both of property, and of all questions which come under the cognizance of the magistrate. And to what length details of this kind are necessarily carried, when once begun, may be understood from an anecdote of the Mussulman code, which we have received from the most respectable authority, that not less than *seventy-five thousand* traditional precepts have been promulgated." (Hamilton's Translation of Hedaya, or Guide.)

the rest, a solemn reserve is maintained. The question concerning the woman who had been married to seven brothers, "Whose shall she be on the resurrection?" was of a nature calculated to have drawn from Christ a more circumstantial account of the state of the human species in their future existance. He cut short, however, the inquiry by an answer, which at once rebuked intruding curiosity, and was agreeable to the best apprehensions we are able to form upon the subject, viz. "That they who are accounted worthy of that resurrection, shall be as the angels of God in heaven." I lay a stress upon this reserve, because it repels the suspicion of enthusiasm; for enthusiasm is wont to expatiate upon the condition of the departed, above all other subjects; and with a wild particularity. It is moreover a topic which is always listened to with greediness. The teacher, therefore, whose principal purpose is to draw upon himself attention, is sure to be full of it. The Koran of Mahomet is half made up of it.

II. Our Lord enjoined no austerities. He not only enjoined none as absolute duties, but he recommended none as carrying men to a higher degree of divine favour. Place Christianity, in this respect, by the side of all institutions which have been founded in the fanaticism, either of their author, or of his first followers: or rather compare, in this respect, Christianity as it came from Christ, with the same religion after it fell into other hands; with the extravagant merit very soon ascribed to celibacy, solitude, voluntary poverty; with the rigours of an ascetic, and the vows of a monastic life; the hair shirt, the watchings, the midnight prayers, the obmutescence, the gloom and mortification of religious orders, and of those who aspired to religious perfection.

III. Our Saviour uttered no impassioned devotion. There was no heat in his piety, or in the language in which he expressed it; no vehement or rapturous ejaculations, no violent urgency, in his prayers. The Lord's prayer is a model of calm devotion. His words in the garden are unaffected expressions, of a deep indeed, but sober, piety. He never appears to have been worked up into any thing like that elation or that emotion of spirits, which is occasionally observed in most of those to whom the name of enthusiast can in any degree be applied. I feel a respect for Methodists, because I believe that there is to be found amongst them much sincere piety, and availing, though not always well-informed Christianity: yet I never attended a meeting of theirs, but I came away with the reflection, how different what I heard, was from what I read! I do not mean in doctrine, with which at present I have no concern, but in manner; how different from the calmness, the sobriety, the good sense, and, I may add, the strength and authority, of our Lord's discourses.

IV. It is very usual with the human mind, to substitute forwardness and fervency in a particular cause, for the merit of general and regular morality; and it is natural, and politic also, in the leader of a sect or party, to encourage such a disposition in his followers. Christ did not overlook this turn of thought; yet, though avowedly placing himself at the head of a new institution, he notices it only to condemn it. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,

shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto you I never knew you; depart from me, *ye that work iniquity.*"* So far was the Author of Christianity from courting the attachment of his followers by any sacrifice of principle, or by a condescension to the errors which even zeal in his service might have inspired! This was a proof both of sincerity and judgment.

V. Nor, fifthly, did he fall in with any of the depraved fashions of his country, or with the natural bias of his own education. Bred up a Jew, under a religion extremely technical, in an age and amongst a people more tenacious of the ceremonies than of any other part of that religion, he delivered an institution, containing less of ritual, and that more simple, than is to be found in any religion which ever prevailed amongst mankind. We have known, I do allow, examples of an enthusiasm, which has swept away all external ordinances before it. But this spirit certainly did not dictate our Saviour's conduct, either in his treatment of the religion of his country, or in the formation of his own institution. In both, he displayed the soundness and moderation of his judgment. He censured an overstrained scrupulousness, or perhaps an affectation of scrupulousness, about the sabbath: but how did he censure it? not by contemning or decrying the institution itself, but by declaring that "the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath;" that is to say, that the sabbath was to be subordinate to its purpose, and that that purpose was the real good of those who were the subjects of the law. The same concerning the nicety of some of the Pharisees, in paying tithes of the most trifling articles, accompanied with a neglect of justice, fidelity, and mercy. He finds fault with them for misplacing their anxiety. He does not speak disrespectfully of the law of tithes, nor of their observance of it; but he assigns to each class of duties its proper station in the scale of moral importance. All this might be expected perhaps from a well-instructed, cool, and judicious philosopher, but was not to be looked for from an illiterate Jew: certainly not from an impetuous enthusiast.

VI. Nothing could be more quibbling, than were the comments and expositions of the Jewish doctors at that time, nothing so puerile as their distinctions. Their evasion of the fifth commandment, their exposition of the law of oaths, are specimens of the bad taste in morals which then prevailed. Whereas, in a numerous collection of our Saviour's apophthegms, many of them referring to sundry precepts of the Jewish law, there is not to be found one example of sophistry, or of false subtilty, or of any thing approaching thereunto.

VII. The national temper of the Jews was intolerant, narrow-minded, and excluding. In Jesus, on the contrary, whether we regard his lessons or his example, we see not only benevolence, but benevolence the most enlarged and comprehensive. In the parable of the good Samaritan, the very point of the story is, that the person

* Matt. vii. 21, 22.

relieved by him, was the national and religious enemy of his benefactor. Our Lord declared the equity of the divine administration, when he told the Jews (what, probably, they were surprised to hear), "That many should come from the east and west, and should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but that the children of the kingdom, should be cast into outer darkness."* His reproof of the hasty zeal of his disciples, who would needs call down fire from heaven to revenge an affront put upon their Master, shews the lenity of his character, and of his religion: and his opinion of the manner in which the most unreasonable opponents ought to be treated, or at least of the manner in which they ought not to be treated. The terms in which his rebuke was conveyed, deserves to be noticed:—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."†

VIII. Lastly, amongst the negative qualities of our religion, as it came out of the hands of its founder and his apostles, we may reckon its complete abstraction from all views either of ecclesiastical or civil policy; or, to meet a language much in fashion with some men, from the politics either of priests or statesmen. Christ's declaration, that "his kingdom was not of this world," recorded by Saint John; his evasion of the question, whether it was lawful or not to give tribute unto Cæsar, mentioned by the three other evangelists; his reply to an application that was made to him to interpose his authority in a question of property: "Man, who made me a ruler, or a judge over you?" ascribed to him by Saint Luke; his declining to exercise the office of a criminal judge in the case of the woman taken in adultery, as related by John, are all intelligible significations of our Saviour's sentiments upon this head. And with respect to *politics*, in the usual sense of that word, or discussions concerning different forms of Government, Christianity declines every question upon the subject. Whilst politicians are disputing about monarchies, aristocracies, and republics, the Gospel is alike applicable, useful, and friendly, to them all; inasmuch as, 1st, it tends to make men virtuous, and as it is easier to govern good men, than bad men under any constitution; as, 2dly, it states obedience to government in ordinary cases, to be not merely a submission to force, but a duty of conscience; as, 3dly, it induces dispositions favourable to public tranquillity, a Christian's chief care being to pass quietly through this world to a better; as, 4thly, it prays for communities, and for the governors of communities, of whatever description or denomination they be, with a solicitude and fervency proportioned to the influence which they possess upon human happiness. All which, in my opinion, is just as it should be. Had there been more to be found in Scripture of a political nature, or convertible to political purposes, the worst use would have been made of it, on whichever side it seemed to lie.

When, therefore, we consider Christ as a moral teacher (remembering that this was only a secondary part of his office; and that morality, by the nature of the subject, does not admit of discovery,

* Matt. viii. 11. † Luke ix. 55.

properly so called);—when we consider either what he taught, or what he did not teach, either the substance or the manner of his instruction; his preference of solid to popular virtues, of a character which is commonly despised to a character which is universally extolled: his placing, in our licentious vices, the check in the right place *viz.* upon the thoughts; his collecting of well-devised rules, his repetition of these rules, the stress he laid upon them, especially in comparison with positive duties, and his fixing thereby the sentiments of his followers: his exclusion of all regard to reputation in our devotion and alms, and, by parity of reason, in our other virtues, —when we consider that his instructions were delivered in a form calculated for impression, the precise purpose in his situation to be consulted; and that they were illustrated by parables, the choice and structure of which would have been admired in any composition whatever;—when we observe him free from the usual symptoms of enthusiasm, heat and vehemence in devotion, austerity in institutions, and a wild particularity in the description of a future state; free also from the depravities of his age and country; without superstition amongst the most superstitious of men, yet not decrying positive distinctions or external observances, but soberly calling them to the principle of their establishment, and to their place in the scale of human duties; without sophistry or trifling, amidst teachers remarkable for nothing so much as frivolous subtilties and quibbling expositions; candid and liberal in his judgment of the rest of mankind, although belonging to a people who affected a separate claim to divine favour, and, in consequence of that opinion, prone to uncharitableness, partiality, and restitution;—when we find, in his religion, no scheme of building up a hierarchy, or of ministering to the views of human governments;—in a word, when we compare Christianity, as it came from its Author, either with other religions, or with itself in other hands, the most reluctant understanding will be induced to acknowledge the probity, I think also the good sense, of those to whom it owes its origin; and that some regard is due to the testimony of such men, when they declare their knowledge that the religion proceeded from God; and when they appeal, for the truth of their assertion, to miracles which they wrought, or which they saw.

Perhaps the qualities which we observe in the religion, may be thought to prove something more. They would have been extraordinary, had the religion come from any person; from the person from whom it did come, they are exceedingly so. What was Jesus in external appearance? A Jewish peasant, the son of a carpenter, living with his father and mother in a remote province of Palestine, until the time that he produced himself in his public character. He had no master to instruct or prompt him; he had read no books, but the works of Moses and the prophets; he had visited no polished cities; he had received no lessons from Socrates or Plato,—nothing to form in him a taste or judgment different from that of the rest of his countrymen, and of persons of the same rank of life with himself. Supposing it to be true, which it is not, that all his points of morality might be picked out of Greek and Roman writings, they were wri-

tings which *he* had never seen. Supposing them to be no more than what some or other had taught in various times and places, he could not collect them together.

Who were his coadjutors in the undertaking,—the persons into whose hands the religion came after his death? A few fishermen upon the lake of Tiberias, persons just as uneducated, and, for the purpose of framing rules of morality, as unpromising as himself. Suppose the mission to be real, all this is accounted for; the unsuitableness of the authors to the production, of the characters to the undertaking, no longer surprises us, but without *reality*, it is very difficult to explain, how such a system should proceed from such persons. Christ was not like any other carpenter; the apostles were not like any other fishermen.

But the subject is not exhausted by these observations. That portion of it, which is most reducible to points of argument, has been stated, and, I trust, truly. There are, however, some topics, of a more diffuse nature, which yet deserve to be proposed to the reader's attention.

The *character of Christ* is a part of the morality of the Gospel; one strong observation upon which is, that, neither as represented by his followers, nor as attacked by his enemies, is he charged with any personal vice. This remark is as old as Origen; "Though innumerable lies and calumnies had been forged against the venerable Jesus, none had dared to charge him with an intemperance."* Not a reflection upon his moral character, not an imputation or suspicion of any offence against purity and chastity, appears for five hundred years after his birth. This faultlessness is more peculiar than we are apt to imagine. Some stain pollutes the morals or the morality of almost every other teacher, and of every other lawgiver.† Zeno the stoic, and Diogenes the cynic, fell into the foulest impurities; of which also Socrates himself was more than suspected. Solon forbade unnatural crimes to slaves. Lycurgus tolerated theft as a part of education. Plato recommended a community of women. Aristotle maintained the general right of making war upon barbarians. The elder Cato was remarkable for the ill usage of his slaves; the younger gave up the person of his wife. One loose principle is found in almost all the Pagan moralists; is distinctly, however, perceived in the writings of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus; and that is, the allowing, and even the recommending to their disciples, a compliance with the religion, and with the religious rites, of every country into which they came. In speaking of the founders of new institutions, we cannot forget Mahomet. His licentious transgressions of his own licentious rules; his abuse of the character which he assumed, and of the power which he had acquired, for the purposes of personal and privileged indulgence; his avowed claim of a special permission from heaven of unlimited sensuality, is known to every reader, as it is confessed by every writer of the Moslem story.

Secondly, In the histories which are left us of Jesus Christ, al-

* Or. Ep. Cels. l. 3. num. 36. ed. Bened.

† See many instances collected by Grotius, de Veritate Christianæ Religionis, in the notes to his second book, p. 116, Pocock's edition.

though very short, and although dealing in narrative, and not in observation or panegyric, we perceive, beside the absence of every appearance of vice, traces of devotion, humility, benignity, mildness, patience, prudence. I speak of *traces* of those qualities, because the qualities themselves are to be collected from incidents; inasmuch as the terms are never used of Christ in the Gospels, nor is any formal character of him drawn in any part of the New Testament.

Thus we see the *devoutness* of his mind, in his frequent retirement to solitary prayer;* in his habitual giving of thanks;† in his reference of the beauties and operations of nature to the bounty of Providence;‡ in his earnest addresses to his Father, more particularly that short but solemn one before the raising of Lazarus from the dead;§ and in the deep piety of his behaviour in the garden, on the last evening of his life;‖ his *humility*, in his constant reproof of contentions for superiority:¶ the *benignity* and affectionateness of his temper, in his kindness to children;** in the tears which he shed over his falling country,†† and upon the death of his friend;‡‡ in his noticing of the widow's mite;§§ in his parables of the good Samaritan, of the ungrateful servant, and of the Pharisee and publican, of which parables no one but a man of humanity could have been the author: the *mildness* and lenity of his character is discovered, in his rebuke of the forward zeal of his disciples at the Samaritan village;‖‖ in his expostulation with Pilate¶¶ in his prayer for his enemies at the moment of his suffering,*† which, though it has been since very properly and frequently imtiated, was then, I apprehend, new. His *prudence* is discerned, where prudence is most wanted, in his conduct on trying occasions, and in answers to artful questions. Of these, the following are examples:—his withdrawing, in various instances, from the first symptoms of tumult,*‡ and with the express care, as appears from Saint Matthew,*§ of carrying on his ministry in quietness; his declining of every species of interference with the civil affairs of the country, which disposition is manifested by his behaviour in the case of the woman caught in adultery,*‖ and in his repulse of the application which was made to him, to interpose his decision about a disputed inheritance:*¶ his judicious, yet, as it should seem, unprepared answers, will be confessed in the case of the Roman tribute;*†† in the difficulty concerning the interfering relations of a future state, as proposed to him in the instances of a woman who had married seven brethren;*‡‡ and, more especially, in his reply to those who demanded from him an explanation of the authority by which he acted, which reply consisted, in propounding a question to them, situated between the very difficulties into which they were insidiously endeavouring to draw *him*.*§§

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* Matt. xiv. 23. Luke ix. 28. Matt. xxvi. 36.
† Matt. xi. 25. Mark viii. 6. John vi. 23. Luke xxii. 17.
‡ Matt. vi. 26—28. § John xi. 41. ‖ Matt. xxvi. 36—47. ¶ Mark ix. 33.
** Mark x. 16. †† Luke xix. 41. ‡‡ John xi. 35. §§ Mark xii. 42.
‖‖ Luke ix. 55. ¶¶ John xix. 11. *† Luke xxiii. 34.
*‡ Matt. xiv. 22. Luke v. 15. 16. John v. 13. vi. 15.
*§ Chap. xii. 19. *‖ John viii. 1.
*¶ Luke xii. 14. *†† Matt. xxii. 19.
*‡‡ Matt. xxii. 28. *§§ Matt. xxi, 23, &c.

Our Saviour's lessons, besides what has already been remarked in them, touch, and that oftentimes by very affecting representations upon some of the most interesting topics of human duty, and of human meditation: upon the principles, by which the decisions of the last day will be regulated:* upon the superior, or rather the supreme, importance of religion:† upon penitence, by the most pressing calls and the most encouraging invitations;‡ upon self-denial,§ watchfulness,‖ placability,¶ confidence in God,** the value of spiritual, that is, of mental worship,†† the necessity of moral obedience, and the directing of that obedience to the spirit and principle of the law, instead of seeking for evasions in a technical construction of its terms.‡‡

If we extend our argument to other parts of the New Testament, we may offer, as amongst the best and shortest rules of life, or, which is the same thing, descriptions of virtue, that have ever been delivered, the following passages:

"Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."§§

"Now the end of the commandment is, charity, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned."‖‖

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."¶¶

Enumerations of virtues and vices, and those sufficiently accurate, and unquestionably just, are given by Saint Paul to his converts in three several epistles."*†

The relative duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children of masters and servants, of Christian teachers and their flocks, of governors and their subjects, are set forth by the same writer,*‡ not indeed with the copiousness, the detail, or the distinctness, of a moralist, who should, in these days, sit down to write chapters upon the subject, but with the leading rules and principles in each; and, above all, with truth, and with authority.

Lastly, the whole volume of the New Testament is replete with *piety;* with, what were almost unknown to heathen moralists, *devotional virtues*, the most profound veneration of the deity, an habitual sense of his bounty and protection, a firm confidence in the final result of his counsels and dispensations, a disposition to resort, upon all occasions, to his mercy, for the supply of human wants, for assistance in danger, for relief from pain, for the pardon of sin.

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* Matt. xxv. 31, &c.
† Mark viii. 35. Matt. vi. 31—33. Luke xii. 4. 5. 16—21.
‡ Luke xv. § Matt. v. 29.
‖ Mark xiii. 37. Matt. xxiv. 42.—xxv. 13.
¶ Luke xvii. 4. Matt. xviii. 33, &c.
** Matt. vi. 25—30. †† John iv. 23, 24.
‡‡ Matt. v. 21. §§ James i. 27.
‖‖ 1 Tim. i. 5. ¶¶ Tit. ii. 11, 12.
*† Gal. v. 19. Col. iii. 12, 1 Cor. xiii.
*‡ Eph. v. 33. vi. 1. 5. 2 Cor. vi. 6. 7. Rom. xiii.

CHAPTER III.

The candour of the writers of the New Testament.

I MAKE this candour to consist, in their putting down many passages, and noticing many circumstances, which no writer whatever was likely to have forged; and which no writer would have chosen to appear in his book, who had been careful to present the story in the most unexceptionable form, or who had thought himself at liberty to carve and mould the particulars of that story, according to his choice, or according to his judgment of the effect.

A strong and well known example of the fairness of the evangelists, offers itself in their account of Christ's resurrection, namely, in their unanimously stating, that after he was risen, he appeared to his disciples alone. I do not mean that they have used the exclusive word *alone;* but that all the instances which they have recorded of his appearance, are instances of appearance to his disciples; that their reasonings upon it, and allusions to it, are confined to this supposition; and that, by one of them, Peter is made to say, "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."* The most common understanding must have perceived, that the history of the resurrection would have come with more advantage, if they had related that Jesus appeared, after he was risen, to his foes as well as his friends, to the Scribes and Pharisees, the Jewish council, and the Roman governor: or even if they had asserted the public appearance of Christ in general unqualified terms, without noticing, as they have done, the presence of his disciples on each occasion, and noticing it in such a manner as to lead their readers to suppose that none but disciples were present. They *could* have represented it in one way as well as the other. And if their point had been, to have the religion believed, whether true or false; if they had fabricated the story *ab initio;* or if they had been disposed either to have delivered their testimony as witnesses, or to have worked up their materials and information as historians, in such a manner as to render their narrative as specious and unobjectionable as they could; in a word, if they had thought of any thing but of the truth of the case, as they understood and believed it; they would in their account of Christ's several appearances after his resurrection, at least have omitted this restriction. At this distance of time the account as we have it, is perhaps more credible than it would have been the other way; because this manifestation of the historians' candour, is of more advantage to their testimony, than the difference in the circumstances of the account would have been to the nature of the evidence. But this is an effect which the evangelists would not foresee: and I think that it was by no means the case at the time when the books were composed.

Mr. Gibbon has argued for the genuineness of the Koran from the confessions which it contains, to the apparent disadvantage of the

* Acts x. 40, 41.

Mahometan cause.*. The same defence vindicates the genuineness of our Gospels, and without prejudice to the cause at all.

There are some other instances in which the evangelists honestly relate what, they must have perceived, would make against them.

Of this kind is John the Baptist's message, preserved by Saint Matthew, (xi. 2.) and Saint Luke (vii. 18.): "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?". To confess, still more to state, that John the Baptist had his doubts concerning the character of Jesus, could not but afford a handle to cavil and objection. But truth, like honesty, neglects appearances. The same observation, perhaps, holds concerning the apostasy of Judas.†

John vi. 66. "From that time, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Was it the part of a writer, who dealt in suppression and disguise, to put down *this* anecdote?

Or this, which Matthew has preserved? (xii. 58.) "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."

Again, in the same evangelist: (v. 17, 18.) "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil: for, verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." At the time the Gospels were written, the apparent tendency of Christ's mission was to diminish the authority of the Mosaic code, and it was so considered by the Jews themselves. It is very improbable, therefore, that, without the constraint of truth, Matthew should have ascribed a saying to Christ, which *primo intuitu*, militated with the judgment of the age in which his Gospel was written. Marcion thought this text so objectionable, that he altered the words so as to invert the sense.‡

Once more: (Acts xxv. 18, 19.) "They brought none accusation against him, of such things as I supposed, but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Nothing could be more in the character of a Roman governor than these words. But that is not precisely the point I am concerned with. A mere panegyrist, or a

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* Vol. ix. c. 50, note 96.

† I had once placed amongst these examples of fair concession, the remarkable words of Saint Matthew, in his account of Christ's appearance upon the Galilean mountain: "And when they saw him, they worshipped him; *but some doubted.*"† I have since however, been convinced by what is observed concerning this passage in Dr. Townshend's discourse‡ upon the resurrection, that the transaction, as related by Saint Matthew, was really this: "Christ appeared first *at a distance*; the greater part of the company, the moment they saw him, worshipped, but some, as yet, *i. e.* upon this first distant view of his person, doubted; whereupon Christ *came up*§ to them, and spake to them," &c.: that the doubt, therefore, was a doubt only at first, for a moment, and upon his being seen at a distance, and was afterward dispelled by his nearer approach, and by his entering into conversation with them.

† Chap. xxviii. 17. ‡ Page 177.

§ Saint Matthew's words are, Και προσελθων ὁ Ιησους, ελαλησεν αυτοις. This intimates, that, when he first appeared, it was at a distance, at least from many of the spectators. Ib. p. 197.

‡ Lardner, Cred. vol. xv. p. 422.

dishonest narrator, would not have represented his cause, or have made a great magistrate represent it, in this manner; *i. e.* in terms not a little disparaging, and bespeaking, on his part, much unconcern and indifference about the matter. The same observation may be repeated of the speech which is ascribed to Gallio, (Acts xviii. 15.) "If it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters."

Lastly, where do we discern a stronger mark of candour, or less disposition to extol and magnify, than in the conclusion of the same history? in which the evangelist, after relating that Paul, on his first arrival at Rome, preached to the Jews from morning until evening, adds, "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."

The following, I think, are passages which were very unlikely to have presented themselves to the mind of a forger or a fabulist.

Matt. xxi. 21. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done unto the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done; all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, it shall be done."* It appears to me very improbable that these words should have been put into Christ's mouth, if he had not actually spoken them. The term "faith" as here used, is perhaps rightly interpreted of confidence in that internal notice, by which the apostles were admonished of their power to perform any particular miracle. And this exposition renders the sense of the text more easy. But the words, undoubtedly in their obvious construction, carry with them a difficulty which no writer would have brought upon himself officiously.

Luke ix. 59. "And he said unto another, Follow me: but he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."† This answer though very expressive of the transcendant importance of religious concerns, was apparently harsh and repulsive; and such as would not have been made for Christ, if he had not really used it. At least some other instance would have been chosen.

The following passage, I, for the same reason, think impossible to have been the production of artifice, or of a cold forgery:—"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire (Gehennæ)." Matt. v. 22. It is emphatic, cogent, and well calculated for the purpose of impression; but is inconsistent with the supposition of art or wariness on the part of the relater.

The short reply of our Lord to Mary Magdalen, after his resurrection, (John xx. 16, 17.) "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my father," in my opinion, must have been founded in a reference or allusion to some prior conversation, for the want of knowing which, his meaning is hidden from us. This very obscurity, how-

* See also chap. xvii. 20. Luke xvii. 6. † See also Matt. viii. 21.

ever, is a proof of genuineness. No one would have forged such an answer.

John vi. The whole of the conversation recorded in this chapter, is, in the highest degree, unlikely to be fabricated, especially the part of our Saviour's reply between the fiftieth and the fifty-eighth verse. I need only put down the first sentence: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Without calling in question the expositions that have been given of this passage, we may be permitted to say, that it labours under an obscurity, in which it is impossible to believe that any one, who made speeches for the persons of his narrative, would have voluntarily involved them. That this discourse was obscure, even at the time, is confessed by the writer who had preserved it, when he tells us, at the conclusion, that many of our Lord's disciples, when they had heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can bear it?"

Christ's taking of a young child, and placing it in the midst of his contentious disciples, (Matt. xviii. 2.) though as decisive a proof as any could be, of the benignity of his temper, and very expressive of the character of the religion which he wished to inculcate, was not by any means an obvious thought. Nor am I acquainted with any thing in any ancient writing which resembles it.

The account of the institution of the eucharist bears strong internal marks of genuineness. If it had been feigned, it would have been more full; it would have come nearer to the actual mode of celebrating the rite, as that mode obtained very early in Christian churches; and it would have been more formal than it is. In the forged piece, called the Apostolic Constitutions, the apostles are made to enjoin many parts of the ritual which was in use in the second and third centuries, with as much particularity as a modern rubric could have done. Whereas, in the history of the Lord's supper, as we read it in St. Matthew's Gospel, there is not so much as the command to repeat it. This, surely, looks like undesignedness. I think also that the difficulty arising from the conciseness of Christ's expression, "This is my body," would have been avoided in a made-up story. I allow that the explication of these words, given by Protestants, is satisfactory; but it is deduced from a diligent comparison of the words in question with forms of expression used in Scripture, and especially by Christ, upon other occasions. No writer would arbitrarily and unnecessarily have thus cast in his reader's way a difficulty, which, to say the least, it required research and erudition to clear up.

Now it ought to be observed, that the argument which is built upon these examples, extends both to the authenticity of the books and to the truth of the narrative: for it is improbable that the forger of a history in the name of another should have inserted such passages in it: and it is improbable also, that the persons whose names the books bear should have fabricated such passages; or even have allowed them a place in their work, if they had not believed them to express the truth.

The following observation, therefore, of Dr. Lardner, the most candid of all advocates, and the most cautious of all inquirers, seems

to be well-founded:—"Christians are induced to believe the writers of the Gospel, by observing the evidences of piety and probity that appear in their writings, in which there is no deceit, or artifice, or cunning, or design." "No remarks," as Dr. Beattie hath properly said, "are thrown in, to anticipate objections; nothing of that caution, which never fails to distinguish the testimony of those who are conscious of imposture; no endeavour to reconcile the reader's mind to what may be extraordinary in the narrative."

I beg leave to cite also another author,* who has well expressed the reflection which the examples now brought forward were intended to suggest. "It doth not appear that ever it came into the mind of these writers, to consider how this or the other action would appear to mankind, or what objections might be raised upon them. But without at all attending to this point, they lay the facts before you, at no pains to think whether they appear credible or not. If the reader will not believe their testimony, there is no help for it: they tell the truth, and attend to nothing else. Surely this looks like sincerity, and that they published nothing to the world but what they believed themselves."

As no improper supplement to this chapter, I crave a place here for observing the extreme *naturalness* of some of the things related in the New Testament.

Mark ix. 23. "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." This struggle in the father's heart, between solicitude for the preservation of his child, and a kind of involuntary distrust of Christ's power to heal him, is here expressed with an air of reality, which could hardly be counterfeited.

Again, (Matt. xxi. 9.) the eagerness of the people to introduce Christ into Jerusalem, and their demand, a short time afterward, of his crucifixion, when he did not turn out what they expected him to be, so far from affording matter of objection, represents popular favour in exact agreement with nature and with experience, as the flux and reflux of a wave.

The rulers and Pharisees rejecting Christ, whilst many of the common people received him, was the effect which, in the then state of Jewish prejudices, I should have expected. And the reason with which they who rejected Christ's mission kept themselves in countenance, and with which also they answered the arguments of those who favoured it, is precisely the reason which such men usually give:—"Have any of the scribes or Pharisees believed on him?" (John vii. 48.)

In our Lord's conversation at the well (John. iv. 29., Christ had surprised the Samaritan woman with an allusion to a singular particular in her domestic situation, "Thou hast had five husbands; and he, whom thou now hast, is not thy husband." The woman, soon after this, ran back to the city, and called out to her neighbours, "Come, see a man which told me *all things* that ever I did." This exaggeration appears to me very natural; especially in the hurried

* Duchal, p. 97, 98

state of spirits into which the woman may be supposed to have been thrown.

The lawyer's subtilty in running a distinction upon the word neighbour, in the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," was no less natural, than our Saviour's answer was decisive and satisfactory (Luke x. 29.) The lawyer of the New Testament, it must be observed, was a Jewish divine.

The behaviour of Gallio, (Acts xviii. 12—17.) and of Festus (xxv. 18, 19.) have been observed upon already.

The consistency of Saint Paul's character throughout the whole of his history, (*viz.* the warmth and activity of his zeal, first against, and then for, Christianity), carries with it very much of the appearance of truth.

There are also some *properties*, as they may be called, observable in the Gospels: that is, circumstances separately suiting with the situation, character, and intention, of their respective authors.

Saint Matthew, who was an inhabitant of Galilee, and did not join Christ's society until some time after Christ had come into Galilee to preach, has given us very little of his history, prior to that period. Saint John, who had been converted before, and who wrote to supply omissions in the other Gospels, relates some remarkable particulars which had taken place before Christ left Judea to go into Galilee.*

Saint Matthew (xv. 1.) has recorded the cavil of the Pharisees, against the disciples of Jesus, for eating "with unclean hands." Saint Mark has also (vii. 1.) recorded the same transaction (taken probably from Saint Matthew), but with this addition; "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands often, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders: and when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not: and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." Now Saint Matthew was not only a Jew himself, but it is evident, from the whole structure of his Gospel, especially from his numerous references to the Old Testament, that he wrote for Jewish readers. The above explanation, therefore, in him, would have been unnatural, as not being wanted by the readers whom he addressed. But in Mark, who, whatever use he might make of Matthew's Gospel, intended his own narrative for a general circulation, and who himself travelled to distant countries in the service of the religion, it was properly added.

CHAPTER IV.

Identity of Christ's character.

THE argument expressed by this title, I apply principally to the comparison of the first three Gospels with that of Saint John. It is known to every reader of Scripture, that the passages of Christ's his-

* Hartley's Observations, vol. ii. p. 103.

tory, preserved by Saint John, are, except his passion and resurrection, for the most part, different from those which are delivered by the other evangelists. And I think the ancient account of this difference to be the true one, *viz.* that Saint John wrote *after* the rest, and to supply what he thought omissions in their narratives, of which the principal were our Saviour's conferences with the Jews of Jerusalem, and his discourses to his apostles at his last supper. But what I observe in the comparison of these several accounts is, that, although actions and discourses are ascribed to Christ by Saint John, in general different from what are given to him by the other evangelists, yet, under this diversity, there is a similitude of *manner*, which indicates that the actions and discourses proceeded from the same person. I should have laid little stress upon the repetition of actions substantially alike, or of discourses containing many of the same expressions, because that is a species of resemblance, which would either belong to a true history, or might easily be imitated in a false one. Nor do I deny, that a dramatic writer is able to sustain propriety and distinction of character, through a great variety of separate incidents and situations. But the evangelists were not dramatic writers; nor possessed the talents of dramatic writers; nor will it, I believe, be suspected, that they *studied* uniformity of character, or ever thought of any such thing, in the person who was the subject of their histories. Such uniformity, if it exists, is on their part casual; and if there be, as I contend there is, a perceptible resemblance of *manner*, in passages, and between discourses, which are in themselves extremely distinct, and are delivered by historians writing without any imitation of, or reference to, one another, it affords a just presumption, that these are, what they profess to be, the actions and the discourses of the same real person; that the evangelists wrote from fact, and not from imagination.

The article in which I find this agreement most strong, is in our Saviour's mode of teaching, and in that particular property of it, which consists in his drawing of his doctrine from the occasion; or, which is nearly the same thing, raising reflections from the objects and incidents before him, or turning a particular discourse then passing, into an opportunity of general instruction.

It will be my business to point out this *manner* in the first three evangelists; and then to inquire, whether it do not appear also, in several examples of Christ's discourses, preserved by Saint John.

The reader will observe in the following quotations, that the Italic letter contains the reflection; the common letter, the incident or occasion from which it springs.

Matt. xii. 47—50. "Then they said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee. But he answered, and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? and he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren: *for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*"

Matt. xvi. 5. "And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread; then Jesus said unto them, *Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the*

Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.—How is it that ye do not understand, that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees? Then understood they *how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the* DOCTRINE *of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*"

Matt. xv. 1, 2, 10, 11, 15—20. "Then came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.——And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear and understand: *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.*——Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do ye not yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? but those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man: *for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man:* BUT TO EAT WITH UNWASHEN HANDS DEFILETH NOT A MAN." Our Saviour on this occasion, expatiates rather more at large than usual, and his discourse also is more divided: but the concluding sentence brings back the whole train of thought to the incident in the first verse, *viz.* the objugatory question of the Pharisees, and renders it evident that the whole sprang from that circumstance.

Mark x. 13—15. "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them: but when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; *for of such is the kingdom of God: verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*"

Mark i. 16, 17. "Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers: and Jesus said unto them, *Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

Luke xi. 27. "And it came to pass as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked: but he said, *Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.*"

Luke xiii. 1—3. "There were present at that season, some that told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices; and Jesus answering, said unto them, *Suppose ye, that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*"

Luke xiv. 15. "And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then said he unto him, *A certain*

man made a great supper and bade many," &c. The parable is rather too long for insertion, but affords a striking instance of Christ's *manner* of raising a discourse from the occasion. Observe also in the same chapter two other examples of advice, drawn from the circumstances of the entertainment and the behaviour of the guests.

We will now see, how this *manner* discovers itself in *Saint John's* history of Christ.

John vi. 25. "And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them, and said, Verily I say unto you, ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.*"

John iv. 12. "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her (the woman of Samaria), Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*"

John iv. 31. "In the mean while, his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat; but he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat? Jesus saith unto them, *My meat is, to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*"

John ix. 1—5. "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth; and his disciples asked him, saying, Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*"

John ix. 35—40. "Jesus heard that they had cast him (the blind man above mentioned) out: and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? And he answered, and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him. And Jesus said, *For judgment I have come into this world, that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind.*"

All that the reader has now to do, is to compare the series of examples taken from Saint John, with the series of examples taken from the other evangelists, and to judge whether there be not a visible agreement of *manner* between them. In the above quoted passages, the occasion is stated, as well as the reflection. They seem, therefore, the most proper, for the purpose of our argument. A large, however, and curious collection has been made by different writers,*

* Newton on Daniel, p. 148, note *a*. Jortin, Dis. p. 213. Bishop Law's Life of Christ.

of instances, in which it is extremely probable that Christ spoke in allusion to some object or some occasion then before him, though the mention of the occasion, or of the object, be omitted in the history. I only observe, that these instances are common to Saint John's Gospel with the other three.

I conclude this article by remarking, that nothing of this *manner* is perceptible in the speeches recorded in the Acts, or in any other but those which are attributed to Christ, and that, in truth, it was a very unlikely manner for a forger or fabulist to attempt; and a manner very difficult for any writer to execute, if he had to supply all the materials, both the incidents and the observations upon them, out of his own head. A forger or a fabulist would have made for Christ, discourses exhorting to virtue and dissuading from vice in general terms. It would never have entered into the thoughts of either, to have crowded together such a number of allusions to time, place, and other little circumstances, as occur, for instance, in the sermon on the mount, and which nothing but the actual presence of the objects could have suggested.*

II. There appears to me to exist an affinity between the history of Christ's placing a little child in the midst of his disciples as related by the first three evangelists,† and the history of Christ's washing his disciples' feet, as given by Saint John.‡ In the stories themselves there is no resemblance. But the affinity which I would point out consists in these two articles: First, that both stories denote the emulation which prevailed amongst Christ's disciples, and his own care and desire to correct it; the moral of both is the same. Secondly, that both stories are specimens of the same manner of teaching, *viz.* by action; a mode of emblematic instruction extremely peculiar, and, in these passages, ascribed, we see, to our Saviour, by the first three evangelists, and by Saint John, in instances totally unlike, and without the smallest suspicion of their borrowing from each other.

III. A singularity in Christ's language, which runs through all the evangelists, and which is found in those discourses of Saint John that have nothing similar to them in the other Gospels, is the appellation of "the Son of man;" and it is in all the evangelists found under the peculiar circumstance of being applied by Christ to himself, but of never being used of him, or towards him, by any other person. It occurs seventeen times in Matthew's Gospel, twenty times in Mark's, twenty-one times in Luke's, and eleven times in John's, and always with this restriction.

IV. A point of agreement in the conduct of Christ, as represented by his different historians, is that of his withdrawing himself out of the way, whenever the behaviour of the multitude indicated a disposition to tumult.

Matt. xiv. 22. "And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitude away. And when he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray."

Luke v. 15, 16. "But so much the more went there a fame

* See Bishop Law's Life of Christ.

† Matt. xviii. 1. Mark ix. 33. Luke ix. 46. ‡ Chap. xiii. 3.

abroad of him, and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities: and he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."

With these quotations, compare the following from Saint John:

Chap. v. 13. "And he that was healed wist not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place."

Chap. vi. 15. "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."

In this last instance, Saint John gives the motive of Christ's conduct, which is left unexplained by the other evangelists, who have related the conduct itself.

V. Another, and a more singular circumstance in Christ's ministry, was the reserve, which, for some time, and upon some occasions at least, he used in declaring his own character, and his leaving it to be collected from his works rather than his professions. Just reasons for this reserve have been assigned.* But it is not what one would have expected. We meet with it in Saint Matthew's Gospel: (chap. xvi. 20.) "Then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." Again, and upon a different occasion, in Saint Mark's: (chap. iii. 11) "And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God: and he straightly charged them that they should not make him known." Another instance similar to this last is recorded by Saint Luke, (chap. iv. 41.) What we thus find in the three evangelists, appears also in a passage of Saint John, (chap. x. 24, 25.) "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." The occasion here was different from any of the rest; and it was indirect. We only discover Christ's conduct through the upbraidings of his adversaries. But all this strengthens the argument. I had rather at any time surprise a coincidence in some oblique allusion, than read it in broad assertions.

VI. In our Lord's commerce with his disciples, one very observable particular is the difficulty which they found in understanding him, when he spoke to them of the future part of his history, especially of what related to his passion or resurrection. This difficulty produced as was natural, a wish in them to ask for further explanation; from which, however, they appear to have been sometimes kept back, by the fear of giving offence. All these circumstances are distinctly noticed by Mark and Luke upon the occasion of his informing them (probably for the first time), that the Son of man should be delivered into the hands of men. "They understood not," the evangelists tell us, "this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying." Luke ix. 45. Mark ix. 32. In Saint John's Gospel we have, on a different occasion, and in a different instance, the same difficulty of apprehension, the same curiosity, and the same restraint:—"A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me; because I go to the father. Then said some of his dis-

* See Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity.

ciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us? A little while, and ye shall not see me, and again, A little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith, Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them,"—&c. John xvi. 16, &c.

VII. The meekness of Christ during his last sufferings, which is conspicuous in the narratives of the first three evangelists, is preserved in that of Saint John under separate examples. The answer given by him, in Saint John,* when the high-priest asked him of his disciples and his doctrine; "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing; why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them;" is very much of a piece with his reply to the armed party which seized him, as we read in Saint Mark's Gospel, and in Saint Luke's :† "Are you come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not." In both answers, we discern the same tranquillity, the same reference to his public teaching. His mild expostulation with Pilate, on two several occasions, as related by Saint John,‡ is delivered with the same unruffled temper, as that which conducted him through the last scene of his life, as described by his other evangelists. His answer in Saint John's Gospel, to the officer who struck him with the palm of his hand, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?"§ was such an answer, as might have been looked for from the person, who, as he proceeded to the place of execution, bid his companions, (as we are told by Saint Luke,‖ weep not for him, but for themselves, their posterity and their country; and who, whilst he was suspended upon the cross, prayed for his murderers, "for they know not," said he, "what they do." The urgency also of his judges and his prosecutors to extort from him a defence to the accusation, and his unwillingness to make any (which was a peculiar circumstance), appears in Saint John's account, as well as in that of the other evangelists.¶

There are moreover two other correspondences between Saint John's history of the transaction and theirs, of a kind somewhat different from those which we have been now mentioning.

The first three evangelists record what is called our Saviour's agony, *i. e.* his devotion in the garden immediately before he was apprehended; in which narrative they all make him pray, "that the cup might pass from him." This is the particular metaphor, which, they all ascribe to him. Saint Matthew adds, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."** Now Saint John does not give the scene in the garden: but when Jesus was seized, and some resistance was attempted to be made by Peter, Jesus, according to his account, checked the attempt with this reply: "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which

* Chap. xviii. 20, 21. † Mark xiv. 48. Luke xxii. 52.
‡ Ch. xviii. 34. xix. 11. § Ch. xviii. 23.
‖ Chap. xxiii. 28. ¶ See John xix. 9. Matt. xxvii. 14. Luke xxiii. 9.
** Chap. xxvi. 42.

my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* This is something more than consistency; it is coincidence: because it is extremely natural, that Jesus, who before he was apprehended, had been praying his Father that "that cup might pass from him," yet with such a pious retraction of his request, as to have added, "If this cup may not pass from me, thy will be done;" it was natural, I say, for the same person when he actually was apprehended, to express the resignation to which he had already made up his thoughts, and to express it in the form of speech which he had before used, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" This is a coincidence between writers, in whose narratives there is no imitation, but great diversity.

A second similar correspondency is the following: Matthew and Mark make a charge, upon which our Lord was condemned, to be a threat of destroying the temple: "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands;"† but they neither of them inform us, upon what circumstance this calumny was founded. Saint John, in the early part of the history,‡ supplies us with this information; for he relates, that, on our Lord's first journey to Jerusalem, when the Jews asked him, "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? he answered, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This agreement could hardly arise from any thing but the truth of the case. From any care or design in Saint John, to make his narrative tally with the narratives of other evangelists, it certainly did not arise, for no such design appears, but the absence of it.

A strong and more general instance of agreement is the following. —The first three evangelists have related the appointment of the twelve apostles,§ and have given a catalogue of their names in form. John, without ever mentioning the appointment, or giving the catalogue, supposes throughout his whole narrative, Christ to be accompanied by a select party of his disciples; the number of those to be twelve;‖ and whenever he happens to notice any one as of that number,¶ it is one included in the catalogue of the other evangelists: and the names principally occurring in the course of *his* history of Christ are the names extant in their list. This last agreement, which is of considerable moment, runs through every Gospel, and through every chapter of each.

All this bespeaks reality.

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* Chap. xviii. 11. † Mark xiv. 58. ‡ Chap. ii. 19.
§ Matt. x. 1. Mark iii. 14. Luke vi. 12.
‖ Chap. vi. 70. ¶ Chap. xx. 24. vi. 71.

CHAPTER V.

Originality of our Saviour's character.

THE Jews, whether right or wrong, had understood their prophecies to foretell the advent of a person, who by some supernatural assistance should advance their nation to independence, and to a supreme degree of splendour and prosperity. This was the reigning opinion and expectation of the times.

Now, had Jesus been an enthusiast, it is probable that his enthusiasm would have fallen in with the popular delusion, and that, whilst he gave himself out to be the person intended by these predictions, he would have assumed the character to which they were universally supposed to relate.

Had he been an impostor, it was his business to have flattered the prevailing hopes, because these hopes were to be the instruments of his attraction and success.

But, what is better than conjectures, is the fact, that all the pretended Messiahs actually did so. We learn from Josephus, that there were many of these. Some of them, it is probable, might be impostors, who thought that an advantage was to be taken of the state of public opinion. Others, perhaps, were enthusiasts, whose imagination had been drawn to this particular object, by the language and sentiments which prevailed around them. But, whether impostors or enthusiasts, they concurred in producing themselves in the character which their countrymen looked for, that is to say, as the restorers and deliverers of the nation, in that sense in which restoration and deliverance were expected by the Jews.

Why therefore Jesus, if he was, like them, either an enthusiast or impostor, did not pursue the same conduct as they did, in framing his character and pretensions, it will be found difficult to explain. A mission, the operation and benefit of which was to take place in another life, was a thing unthought of as the subject of these prophecies. That Jesus, coming to them as their Messiah, should come under a character totally different from that in which they expected him; should deviate from the general persuasion, and deviate into pretensions absolutely singular and original; appears to be inconsistent with the imputation of enthusiasm or imposture, both which, by their nature, I should expect, would, and both which, throughout the experience which this very subject furnishes, in fact *have*, followed the opinions that obtained at the time.

If it be said, that Jesus, having tried the other plan, turned at length to this. I answer, that the thing is said without evidence; against evidence; that it was competent to the rest to have done the same, yet that nothing of this sort was thought of by any.

CHAPTER VI.

ONE argument, which has been much relied upon (but not more than its just weight deserves), is the conformity of the facts occasionally mentioned or referred to in Scripture, with the state of things in those times as represented by foreign and independent accounts; which conformity proves, that the writers of the New Testament possessed a species of local knowledge, which could only belong to an inhabitant of that country, and to one living in that age. This argument if well made out by examples, is very little short of proving the absolute genuineness of the writings. It carries them up to the age of the reputed authors, to an age in which it must have been difficult to impose upon the Christian public, forgeries in the names of those authors, and in which there is no evidence that any forgeries were attempted. It proves, at least, that the books, whoever were the authors of them, were composed by persons living in the time and country in which these things were transacted: and consequently capable, by their situation, of being well informed of the facts which they relate. And the argument is stronger when applied to the New Testament, than it is in the case of almost any other writings, by reason of the mixed nature of the allusions which this book contains. The scene of action is not confined to a single country, but displayed in the greatest cities of the Roman empire. Allusions are made to the manners and principles of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews. This variety renders a forgery proportionably more difficult, especially to writers of a posterior age. A Greek or Roman Christian, who lived in the second or third century, would have been wanting in Jewish literature; a Jewish convert in those ages would have been equally deficient in the knowledge of Greece and Rome.*

This, however, is an argument which depends entirely upon an induction of particulars; and as, consequently, it carries with it little force, without a view of the instances upon which it is built, I have to request the reader's attention to a detail of examples, distinctly and articulately proposed. In collecting these examples, I have done no more than epitomize the first volume of the first part of Dr. Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History. And I have brought the argument within its present compass, first, by passing over some of his sections in which the accordancy appeared to me less certain, or upon subjects not sufficiently appropriate or circumstantial; secondly, by contracting every section into the fewest words possible, contenting myself for the most part with a mere *apposition* of passages: and, thirdly, by omitting many disquisitions, which, though learned and accurate, are not absolutely necessary to the understanding or verification of the argument.

The writer principally made use of in the inquiry, is, Josephus. Josephus was born at Jerusalem four year's after Christ's ascension. He wrote his history of the Jewish war some time after the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in the year of our Lord LXX, that is, thirty-seven years after the ascension; and his history of the

* Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament (Marsh's Translation), c. ii sect. xi.

Jews he finished in the year XCIII, that is, sixty years after the ascension.

At the head of each article, I have referred, by figures included in brackets, to the page of Dr. Lardner's volume, where the section, from which the abridgment is made, begins. The edition used, is that of 1741.

I. [p. 14.] Matt. ii. 22. "When he (Joseph) heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee."

In this passage it is asserted, that Archelaus succeeded Herod in Judea; and it is implied, that his power did *not* extend to Galilee. Now we learn from Josephus, that Herod the Great, whose dominion included all the land of Israel, appointed Archelaus his successor in *Judea*, and assigned the *rest* of his dominions to other sons; and that this disposition was ratified, as to the main parts of it, by the Roman emperor.*

Saint Matthew says, that Archelaus *reigned*, was *king* in Judea. Agreeably to this, we are informed by Josephus, not only that Herod appointed Archelaus his successor in Judea, but that he also appointed him with the title of King; and the Greek verb βασιλευει, which the evangelist uses to denote the government and rank of Archelaus, is used likewise by Josephus.†

The cruelty of Archelaus's character, which is not obscurely intimated by the Evangelist, agrees with divers particulars in his history, preserved by Josephus:—"In the tenth year of his government, the chief of the Jews and Samaritans, not being able to endure his cruelty and tyranny, presented complaints against him to Cæsar."‡

II. [p. 19.] Luke iii. 1. "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar,—Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip, tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis,—the word of God came unto John."

By the will of Herod the Great, and the decree of Augustus thereupon, his two sons were appointed, one (Herod Antipas), tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, and the other (Philip) tetrarch of Trachonitis, and the neighbouring countries.§ We have therefore these two persons in the situations in which Saint Luke places them; and also, that they were in these situations in the *fifteenth* year of Tiberius; in other words, that they continued in possession of their territories and titles until that time, and afterward, appears from a passage of Josephus, which relates of Herod, "that he was *removed* by Caligula, the successor of Tiberius;‖ and of Philip, that he died in the *twentieth* year of Tiberius, when he had governed Trachonitis and Batanea and Gaulanitis thirty-seven years."¶

III. [p. 20.] Mark vi. 17.** "Herod had sent forth, and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison, for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her."

With this compare Joseph. Antiq. l. xviii. c. 6. sect. 1—"He

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* Ant. lib. xvii. c. 8. sect 1. † De Bell. lib. i. c. 33. sect. 7.
‡ Ant. lib. xvii. c. 13. sect. 1. § Ibid. lib. xvii. c. 8. sect ii.
‖ Ibid. lib. xviii. c. 8. sect. 2. ¶ Ibid. c. 5. sect. 6.
** See also Matt. xiv. 1—13. Luke iii. 19.

(Herod the tetrarch) made a visit to Herod his brother.—Here, falling in love with Herodias, the wife of the said Herod, he ventured to make her proposals of marriage."*

Again, Mark vi. 22. "And when the *daughter of the said Herodias* came in and danced——."

With this also compare Joseph. Antiq. l. xviii. c. 6. sect. 4. "Herodias was married to Herod, son of Herod the Great. *They had a daughter*, whose name was Salome: after whose birth, Herodias, in utter violation of the laws of her country, left her husband, then living, and married Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, her husband's brother by the father's side.

IV. [p. 29.] Acts xii. 1. "Now, about that time, *Herod the king* stretched forth his hands, to vex certain of the church." In the conclusion of the same chapter. Herod's *death* is represented to have taken place soon after this persecution. The accuracy of our historian, or rather, the unmeditated coincidence, which truth of its own accord produces, is in this instance remarkable. There was no portion of time, for thirty years before, nor *ever* afterward, in which there was a *king* at Jerusalem, a person exercising that authority in Judea, or to whom that title could be applied, except the three last years of this Herod's life, within which period the transaction recorded in the Acts is stated to have taken place. This prince was the grandson of Herod the Great. In the Acts, he appears in his family-name of Herod; by Josephus he was called Agrippa. For proof that he was a *king*, properly so called, we have the testimony of Josephus in full and direct terms:—"Sending for him to his palace, Caligula put a crown upon his head, and appointed him king of the tetrarchie of Philip, intending also to give him the tetrarchie of Lysanias."† And that Judea was at last, but not until the last, included in his dominions, appears by a subsequent passage of the same Josephus, wherein he tells us, that Claudius, by a degree, confirmed to Agrippa the dominion which Caligula had given him; *adding also Judea and Samaria in the utmost extent, as possessed by his grandfather Herod.*‡

V. [p. 32.] Acts xii. 19—23. "And he (Herod) went down from Judea to Cesarea, and there abode.—And on a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, set upon his throne, and made an oration unto them: and the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man: and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

* The affinity of the two accounts is unquestionable; but there is a difference in the name of Herodias's first husband, which, in the evangelist, is Philip; in Josephus, Herod. The difficulty however, will not appear considerable, when we recollect how common it was in those times for the same person to bear two names. "Simon, which is called Peter; Lebbeus, whose surname is Thaddeus; Thomas, which is called Didymus: Simeon, who was called Niger; Saul, who was also called Paul." The solution is rendered likewise easier in the present case, by the consideration, that Herod the Great had children by seven or eight wives; that Josephus mentions three of his sons under the name of Herod: that it is nevertheless highly probable, that the brothers bore some additional name, by which they were distinguished from one another. Lardner, vol. ii. p. 897.

† Antiq. xviii. c. 7. sect 10. ‡ Ib. xix, c. 5. sect 1.

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xix. c. 8. sect. 2. "He went to the city of Cesarea. Here he celebrated shows in honour of Cæsar. On the second day of the shows, early in the morning, he came into the theatre, dressed in a robe of silver, of most curious workmanship. The rays of the rising sun, reflected from such a splendid garb, gave him a majestic and awful appearance. They called him a god; and entreated him to be propitious to them, saying, hitherto we have respected you as a man? but now we acknowledge you to be more than mortal. The king neither reproved these persons, nor rejected the impious flattery.—Immediately after this he was seized with pains in his bowels, extremely violent at the very first.—He was carried therefore with all haste to his palace. These pains continually tormenting him, he expired in five days' time."

The reader will perceive the accordancy of these accounts in various particulars. The place (Cesarea), the set day, the gorgeous dress, the acclamations of the assembly, the peculiar turn of the flattery, the reception of it, the sudden and critical incursion of the disease, are circumstances noticed in both narratives. The worms, mentioned by Saint Luke, are not remarked by Josephus; but the appearance of these is a symptom, not unusually, I believe, attending the diseases which Josephus describes, *viz.* violent affections of the bowels.

VI. [p. 41.] Acts xxiv. 24. "And after certain days when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul."

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. c. 6. sect. 1, 2. "Agrippa gave his sister Drusilla in marriage to Azizus, king of the Emesnes, when he had consented to be circumcised.—But this marriage of Drusilla with Azizus was dissolved in a short time after in this manner:—When *Felix was procurator of Judea*, having had a sight of her, he was mightily taken with her.—She was induced to transgress the laws of her country, and marry Felix."

Here the public station of Felix, the name of his wife, and the singular circumstance of her religion, all appear in perfect conformity with the evangelist.

VII.*[p. 46.] "And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came to Cesarea to salute Festus." By this passage we are in effect told, that Agrippa was a king, but not of Judea; for he came to salute Festus, who at this time administered the government of that country at Cesarea.

Now, how does the history of the age correspond with this account? The Agrippa here spoken of was the son of Herod Agrippa, mentioned in the last article; but that he did not succeed to his father's kingdom, nor ever recovered Judea, which had been a part of it, we learn by the information of Josephus, who relates of him, that when his father was dead, Claudius intended, at first, to have put him immediately in possession of his father's dominions; but that Agrippa being then but seventeen years of age, the emperor was persuaded to alter his mind, and appointed Cuspius Fadus prefect of Judea and the whole kingdom;† which Fadus was

* Acts xxv. 13. † Antiq. xix. c. 9. ad fin.

succeeded by Tiberius Alexander, Cumanus, Felix, Festus.* But that, though disappointed of his father's kingdom, in which was included Judea, he was nevertheless rightly styled *King* Agrippa, and that he was in possession of considerable territories bordering upon Judea, we gather from the same authority; for, after several successive donations of country, "Claudius at the same time that he sent Felix to be procurator of Judea, promoted Agrippa from Chalcis to a greater *kingdom*, giving to him the tetrarchie which had been Philip's; and he added moreover the *kingdom*, of Lysanias, and the province that had belonged to Varus."†

Saint Paul addresses this person as a Jew: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." As the son of Herod Agrippa, who is described by Josephus to have been a zealous Jew, it is reasonable to suppose that he maintained the same profession. But what is more material to remark, because it is more close and circumstantial, is, that Saint Luke, speaking of the father, (Acts xii. 1—3.) calls him Herod the King, and gives an example of the exercise of his authority at Jerusalem: speaking of the son, (xxv. 13.) he calls him king, but not of Judea; which distinction agrees correctly with the history.

VIII. [p. 51.] Acts xiii. 6. "And when they had gone through the isle (Cyprus) to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus, which was with the deputy of the country, Serjius Paulus, a prudent man.

The word, which is here translated deputy, signifies *proconsul*, and upon this word our observation is founded. The provinces of the Roman empire were of two kinds; those belonging to the emperor, in which the governor was called proprætor; and those belonging to the senate, in which the governor was called proconsul. And this was a regular distinction. Now it appears from Dio Cassius,‡ that the province of Cyprus, which in the original distribution was assigned to the emperor, had been transferred to the senate, in exchange for some others; and that, after this exchange, the appropriate title of the Roman governor was proconsul.

Ib. xviii. 12. [p. 55.] "And when Gallio was deputy (*proconsul*) of Achaia."

The propriety of the title "proconsul" is in this passage still more critical. For the province of Achaia, after passing from the senate to the emperor, had been restored again by the emperor Claudius to the senate (and consequently its government had become *proconsular*) only six or seven years before the time in which this transaction is said to have taken place.§ And what confines with strictness the appellation to the time is, that Achaia under the following reign ceased to be a Roman province at all.

IX. [p. 152.] It appears, as well from the general constitution of a Roman province, as from what Josephus delivers concerning the

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* Antiq. xx. De Bell. lib. ii.
† De Bell. lib. ii. c. 12. ad fin.
‡ Ibid. lib. liv. ad. A.U. 732.
§ Suet. in. Claud. c. 25. Dio. lib. lxi.

state of Judea in particular,* that the power of life and death resided exclusively in the Roman governor; but that the Jews, nevertheless, had magistrates and a council, invested with a subordinate and municipal authority. This economy is discerned in every part of the Gospel narrative of our Saviour's crucifixion.

X. [p. 203.] Acts ix. 31. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria."

This *rest* synchronizes with the attempt of Caligula to place his statue in the temple of Jerusalem; the threat of which outrage produced amongst the Jews a consternation that, for a season, diverted their attention from every other object.†

XI. [p. 218.] Acts xxi. 30. "And they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple; and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came to the chief captain of the *band*, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains, and demanded, who he was, and what he had done; and some cried one thing, and some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the *castle*. And when he came upon the *stairs*, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people."

In this quotation, we have the band of Roman soldiers at Jerusalem, their office (to suppress tumults), the castle, the stairs, both, as it should seem, adjoining to the temple. Let us inquire whether we can find these particulars in any other record of that age and place.

Joseph. de. Bell. lib. v. c. 5. sect 8. "Antonia was situated at the angle of the western and northern porticoes of the outer temple. It was built upon a rock fifty cubits high, steep on all sides.—On that side where it joined to the porticoes of the temple, there were *stairs* reaching to each portico, by which the *guard* descended; for there was always lodged here a *Roman Legion*, and posting themselves in their armour in several places in the porticoes, they kept a watch on the people on the feast-days *to prevent all disorders*: for as the temple was a guard to the city, so was Antonia to the temple."

XII. [p. 224.] Acts iv. 1. "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the *captain of the temple*, and the Sadducees, came upon them." Here we have a public officer, under the title of captain of the temple, and he probably a Jew, as he accompanied the priests and Sadducees in apprehending the apostles.

Joseph. de Bell. lib. ii. c. 17. sect 2. "And at the *temple*, Eleazar, the son of Ananias, the high-priest, a young man of a bold and resolute disposition, then *captain*, persuaded those who performed the sacred ministrations not to receive the gift or sacrifice of any stranger."

XIII. [p. 225.] Acts xxv. 12. "Then Festus, when he had conferred with the *council*, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go." That it was usual for the Roman presi-

* Antiq. lib. xx. c. 8. sect. 5. c. i. sect. 2.
† Joseph. de Bell. lib. xi. c. 13. sect. 1. 3. 4.

dents to have a council, consisting of their friends, and other chief Romans in the province, appears expressly in the following passage of Cicero's oration against Verres:—"Illud negare posses, aut nunc negabis, te, concilio tuo dimisso, viris primariis, qui in consilio C. Sacerdotis fuerant, tibique esse volebant, remotis, de re judicatâ judicâsse?"

XIV. [p. 235.] Acts xvi. 13. "And (at Phillippi on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made," or where a προσευχη, oratory, or place of prayer was allowed. The particularity to be remarked, is the situation of the place where prayer was wont to be made, *viz.* by a *river-side.*

Philo, describing the conduct of the Jews of Alexandria, on a certain public occasion, relates of them, that "early in the morning, flocking out of the gates of the city, they go to the *neighbouring shores* (for the προσευχαι were destroyed), and standing in a most pure place, they lift up their voices with one accord."*

Josephus gives us a decree of the city of Halicarnasus, permitting the Jews to build oratories; a part of which decree runs thus:—"We ordain that the Jews who are willing, men and women, do observe the sabbaths, and perform sacred rites, according to the Jewish laws, and *build oratories by the sea-side.*"†

Tertullian, among other Jewish rites and customs, such as feasts, sabbaths, fasts, and unleavened bread, mentions "orationes *litorales;*" that is, prayers by the river-side."‡

XV. [p. 255.] Acts xxvi. 5. "After the most *straitest* sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee."

Joseph. de Bell. lib. i. c. 5. sect 2. "The Pharisees were reckoned the most religious of any of the Jews, and to be the most *exact* and skilful in explaining the laws."

In the original, there is an agreement not only in the sense, but in the expression, it being the same Greek adjective, which is rendered "strait" in the Acts, and "exact" in Josephus.

XVI. [p. 255.] Mark vii. 3. 4. "The Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and many other things there be which they have received to hold."

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 10. sect. 6. "The Pharisees have delivered to the people many institutions, as received from the fathers, which are not written in the law of Moses."

XVII. [p. 259.] Acts xxiii. 8. "For the Sadducees say, that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both."

Joseph. de Bell. lib. ii. c. 8. sect. 14. "They (the Pharisees) believe every soul to be immortal, but that the soul of the good only passes into another body, and that the soul of the wicked is punished with eternal punishment." On the other hand, (Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 1. sect. 4.) "It is the opinion of the Sadducees, that souls perish with the bodies."

XVIII. [p. 268.] Acts v. 17. "Then the high-priest rose up, and

* Philo in Flacc. p. 382
† Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 10. sect. 24.
‡ Tertull. ad Nat. lib. i. c. 13.

all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and were filled with indignation." Saint Luke here intimates, that the high-priest was a Sadducee; which is a character one would not have expected to meet with in that station. The circumstance, remarkable as it was, is not however without examples.

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 10. sect. 6. 7. "John Hyrcanus, high-priest of the Jews, forsook the Pharisees upon a disgust, and joined himself to the party of the Sadducees." This high-priest died one hundred and seven years before the Christian era.

Again, (Antiq. lib. xx. c. 8. sect. 1.) "This Ananus the younger, who, as we have said just now, had received the high-priesthood, was fierce and haughty in his behaviour, and, above all men, bold and daring, and, moreover, *was of the sect of the Sadducees.*" This high-priest lived little more than twenty years after the transaction in the Acts.

XIX. [p. 282.] Luke ix. 51. "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face. And they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem."

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. c. 5. sect 1. "It was the custom of the Galileans, who went up to the holy city at the feasts, to travel through the country of Samaria. As they were in their journey, some inhabitants of the village called Ginæa, which lies on the borders of Samaria and the great plain, falling upon them, killed a great many of them."

XX. [p. 278.] John iv. 20. "Our fathers," said the Samaritan woman, "worshipped in *this mountain*; and ye say, that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 5. sect. 1. Commanding them to meet him at *mount Gerizim*, which is by them (the Samaritans) esteemed the most sacred of all mountains."

XXI. [p. 312.] Matt. xxvi. 3. "Then assembled together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, *who was called Caiaphas.*" That Caiaphas was high-priest, and high-priest throughout the presidentship of Pontius Pilate, and consequently at this time, appears from the following account:—He was made high-priest by Valerius Gratus, *predecessor* of Pontius Pilate, and was removed from his office by Vitellius, president of Syria, *after* Pilate was sent away out of the province of Judea. Josephus relates the *advancement* of Caiaphas to the high-priesthood in this manner: "Gratus gave the high-priesthood to Simon, the son of Camithus. He, having enjoyed this honour not above a year, was succeeded by Joseph, *who is also called Caiaphas.** After this, Gratus went away for Rome, having been eleven years in Judea; and *Pontius Pilate came thither as his successor.*" Of the *removal* of Caiaphas from his office, Josephus, likewise, afterward informs us; and connects it with a circumstance which fixes the time to a date subse-

* Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 2. sect 2.

quent to the determination of Pilate's government—"Vitellius," he tells us, "ordered *Pilate to repair to Rome; and after that*, went up himself to Jerusalem, and then gave directions concerning several matters. And having done these things, he took away the priesthood from the *high-priest* Joseph, who is called *Caiaphas*."*

XXII. (Michaelis, c. xi. sect. 11.) Acts xxiii. 4. "And they that stood by, said, Revilest thou God's high-priest? Then said Paul I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest." Now, upon inquiry into the history of the age, it turns out, that Ananias, of whom this is spoken, was in truth, *not* the high-priest, though he was sitting in judgment in that assumed capacity. The case was, that he had formerly holden the office, and had been deposed; that the person who succeeded him had been murdered; that another was not yet appointed to the station; and that, during the vacancy, he had, of his own authority, taken upon himself the discharge of the office.† This singular situation of the high-priesthood took place during the interval between the death of Jonathan, who was murdered by order of Felix, and the accession of Ismael, who was invested with the high-priesthood by Agrippa; and precisely in this interval it happened that Saint Paul was apprehended, and brought before the Jewish council.

XXIII. [p. 323.] Matt. xxvi. 59. "Now the *chief priests* and elders, and all the council sought false witness against him."

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 15. sect. 3. 4. "Then might be seen the *high-priests themselves*, with ashes on their heads and their breasts naked."

The agreement here consists in speaking of the high-priests or chief priests (for the name in the original is the same) in the *plural number*, when, in strictness, there was only *one* high-priest: which may be considered as a proof, that the evangelists were habituated to the manner of speaking then in use, because they retain it when it is neither accurate nor just. For the sake of brevity, I have put down, from Josephus, only a single example of the application of this title in the plural number; but it is his usual style.

Ib. [p. 871.] Luke iii. 1. "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod, being tetrarch of Galilee *Annas and Caiaphas being the high-priests*, the word of God came unto John." There is a passage in Josephus very nearly parallel to this, and which may at least serve to vindicate the evangelists from objection, with respect to his giving the title of high-priest specifically to two persons at the same time: 'Quadratus sent two others of the most powerful men of the Jews, as also the *high-priests Jonathan and Ananias*."‡ That Annas was a person in an eminent station, and possessed an authority co-ordinate with, or next to, that of the high-priest properly so called, may be inferred from Saint John's Gospel, which, in the history of Christ's

* Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 5. sect 3.
† Ibid. l. xx. c. 5. sect. 2; c. 1. sect. 2.
‡ De Bell. lib. ix. c. 12. sect. 6.

crucifixion, relates that "the soldiers led him away to Annas first."* And this might be noticed as an example of undesigned coincidence in the two evangelists.

Again, [p. 870.] Acts iv. 6. Annas is called the high-priest, though Caiaphas was in the office of the high-priesthood. In like manner, in Josephus.† "Joseph, the son of Gorion, and the high-priest Ananus, were chosen to be supreme governors of all things in the city." Yet Ananus, though here called the high-priest Ananus, was not then in the office of the high-priesthood. The truth is, there is an indeterminateness in the use of this title in the Gospel; sometimes it is applied exclusively to the person who held the office at the time; sometimes to one or two more, who probably shared with him some of the powers or functions of the office; and, sometimes, to such of the priests as were eminent by their station or character;‡ and, there is the very same indeterminateness in Josephus.

XXIV. [p. 347.] John xix. 19. 20. "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross." That such was the custom of the Romans on these occasions, appears from passages of Suetonius and Dio Cassius; "Patrem familias—canibus objecit, cum hoc *titulo*, Impiè locutus parmularius." Suet. Domit. cap. x. And in Dio Cassius we have the following: "Having led him through the midst of the court or assembly, *with a writing signifying the cause of his death*, and afterward crucifying him." Book liv.

Ib. "And it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin." That *it* was also usual about this time, in Jerusalem, to set up advertisements in *different* languages, is gathered from the account which Josephus gives us of an expostulatory message from Titus to the Jews, when the city was almost in his hands; in which he says, Did ye not erect pillars with inscriptions on them, *in the Greek, and in our language*, "Let no one pass beyond these bounds?"

XXV. [p. 352.] Matt. xxvii. 26. "When he had *scourged* Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

The following passages occur in Josephus.

"Being *beaten* they were crucified opposite to the citadel."§

"Whom, having *first scourged with whips*, he crucified."‖

"He was burnt alive, *having been first beaten*."¶

To which may be added one from Livy, lib. xi. c. 5. "Producti-que omnes, *virgisque cæsi*, ac securi percussi."

A modern example may illustrate the use we make of this instance. The preceding, of a capital execution by the corporal punishment of the sufferer, is a practise unknown in England, but retained, in some instances at least, as appears by the late execution of a regicide, in Sweden. This circumstance, therefore, in the account of an English execution, purporting to come from an English writer, would not only bring a suspicion upon the truth of the account, but would, in a con-

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* De Bell. lib. xviii. 13.
† Lib. ii. c. 20. sect 3.
‡ Mark xiv. 53.
§ P. 1247, edit. 24. Huds.
‖ P. 1080, edit. 45.
¶ P. 1327, edit. 43.

siderable degree, impeach its pretensions of having been written by the author whose name it bore. Whereas the same circumstance, in the account of a Swedish execution, would verify the account, and support the authenticity of the book in which it was found; or, at least, would prove that the author, whoever he was, possessed the information and the knowledge which he ought to possess.

XXVI. [p. 353.] John xix. 16. "And they took Jesus, and led him away; and he, *bearing his cross*, went forth."

Plutarch, De iis qui serò puniuntur, p. 554. a Paris, 1624. "Every kind of wickedness produces its own particular torment, just as every malefactor, when he is brought forth to execution, *carries his own cross.*"

XXVII. John xix. 32. "Then came the soldiers, and *brake the legs* of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him."

Constantine abolished the punishment of the cross; in commending which edict, a heathen writer notices this very circumstance of *breaking the legs*: "Eo pius, ut etiam vetus veterrimumque supplicium, patibulum, et *cruribus suffringendis*, primus removerit." Aur. Vict. Ces. cap. xli.

XXVIII. [p. 457.] Acts iii. 1. "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, being the *ninth* hour."

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 7. sect. 8. "Twice every day, in the morning and at the *ninth* hour, the priests perform their duty at the altar."

XXIX. [p. 462.] Acts xv. 21. "For Moses, of old time hath, in every city, them that preach him, *being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.*"

Joseph. contra Ap. l. ii. "He (Moses) gave us the law, the most excellent of all institutions; nor did he appoint that it should be heard once only, or twice, or often, but that laying aside all other works, we should meet together *every week* to hear it read, and gain a perfect understanding of it."

XXX. [p. 465.] Acts xxi. 23. "We have four men, which have a *vow* on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, that they may *shave their heads.*"

Joseph. de Bell. l. xi. c. 15. "It is customary for those who have been afflicted with some distemper, or have laboured under any other difficulties, to make a *vow* thirty days before they offer sacrifices, to abstain from wine, and *shave the hair of their heads.*"

Ib. v. 24. "Them take, and purify thyself with them, and *be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads.*"

Joseph. Antiq. l. xix. c. 6. "He (Herod Agrippa) coming to Jerusalem, offered up sacrifices of thanksgiving, and omitted nothing that was prescribed by the law. For which reason *he also ordered a good number of Nazarites to be shaved.*" We here find that it was an act of piety amongst the Jews, to defray for those who were under the Nazaritic vow the expenses which attended its completion; and that the phrase was "that they might be shaved." The custom and the expression are both remarkable, and both in close conformity with the Scripture account.

XXXI. [p. 474.] 2 Cor. xi. 24. "Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes, *save one.*"

Joseph. Antiq. iv. c. 8. sect. 21. "He that acts contrary hereto, let him receive forty stripes, *wanting one*, from the public officer."

The coincidence here is singular, because the law *allowed* forty stripes:—"Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed." Deut. xxv. 3. "It proves that the author of the epistle to the Corinthians was guided, not by books, but by facts; because his statement agrees with the actual custom, even when that custom deviated from the written law, and from what he must have learnt by consulting the Jewish code, as set forth in the Old Testament.

XXXII. [p. 490.] Luke iii. 12. "Then came also *publicans* to be baptised." From this quotation, as well as from the history of Levi or Matthew (Luke v. 29.) and of Zaccheus, (Luke xix. 2.) it appears that the publicans or tax-gatherers were, frequently at least, if not always Jews; which, as the country was then under a Roman government and the taxes were paid to the Romans, was a circumstance not to be expected. That it was the truth however of the case, appears, from a short passage of Josephus.

De Bell. lib. ii. c. 14. sect. 45. "But, Florus not restraining these practices by his authority, the chief men of the Jews, *among whom was John the publican*, not knowing well what course to take, wait upon Florus, and give him eight talents of silver to stop the building."

XXXIII. [p. 496.] Acts xxii. 25. "And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you *to scourge a man that is a Roman*, and uncondemned.

"Facinus est vinciri civem Romanum; scelus verberari," Cic. in Verr.

"Cædebatur virgis, in medio foro Messanæ, civis Romanus, Judices: cùm intereà nullus gemitus, nulla vox alia, istius miseri inter dolorem crepitumque plagarum audiebatur, nisi hæc, *Civis Romanus sum.*"

XXXIV. [p. 513.] Acts xxii. 27, "Then the chief captain came, and said unto him (Paul), Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea." The circumstance here to be noticed is, that a *Jew* was a Roman citizen.

Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 10. sect 13. "Lucius Lentulus, the consul, declared, I have dismissed from the service *the Jewish Roman citizens*, who observe the rites of the Jewish religion at Ephesus."

Ib. ver. 28. "And the chief captain answered, *With a great sum obtained I this freedom.*"

Dio Cassius, lib. lx. "This privilege, which had been *bought formerly at a great price*, became so cheap, that it was commonly said, a man might be made a Roman citizen for a few pieces of broken glass."

XXXV. [p. 521.] Acts xxviii. 16. "And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself, with a *soldier that kept him.*"

With which join ver. 20. "For the hope of Israel, I am bound with *this chain.*"

"Quemadmodùm eadem *catena* et custodiam et *militem* copulat; sic ista, quæ tam dissimilia sunt, pariter incedunt." Seneca, Ep. v.

"Proconsul æstimare solet, utrùm in carcerum recipienda sit persona, an *militi tradenda.*" Ulpian. l. i. sect. De Custod. et Exhib. Reor.

In the confinement of Agrippa by the order of Tiberius, Antonia managed, that the centurion who presided over the guards, and the *soldier to whom Agrippa was to be bound,* might be men of mild character. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 7. sect. 5.) After the accession of Caligula, Agrippa also, like Paul, was suffered to dwell, yet as a prisoner, in his own house.

XXXVI. [p. 531.] Acts xxvii. 1. "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul, *and certain other prisoners,* unto one named Julius," Since not only Paul, but certain other *prisoners* were sent by the same ship into Italy, the text must be considered as carrying with it an intimation, that the sending of persons from Judea to be tried at Rome, was an ordinary practice. That in truth it was so, is made out by a variety of examples which the writings of Josephus furnish; and, amongst others, by the following, which comes near both to the time and the subject of the instance in the Acts. "Felix, for some slight offence, *bound and sent to Rome* several priests of his acquaintance, and very good and honest men, to answer for themselves to Cæsar." Joseph. in Vit. sect. 3.

XXXVII. [p. 539.] Acts xi. 27. "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch: and there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world (or all the country); *which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.*"

Joseph. Antiq. l. xx. c. 4. sect. 2. "In their time (*i. e.* about the fifth or sixth year of Claudius) a great dearth happened in Judea."

XXXVIII. [p. 555.] Acts xviii. 1. 2. "Because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome."

Suet. Claud. c. xxv. "Judæos, impulsore Chresto assiduè tumultuantes, Româ expulit."

XXXIX. [p. 664.] Acts v. 37. "After this man, rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him."

Joseph. de Bell. l. vii. "He (*viz.* the person who in another place is called, by Josephus, Judas the Galilean or Judas of Galilee) persuaded not a few not to enrol themselves, when Cyrenius the censor was sent into Judea."

XL. [p. 942.] Acts xxi. 38. "Art not thou that Egyptian which, before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?"

Joseph. de Bell. l. ii. c. 13. sect. 5. "But the Egyptian false pro-

phet brought a yet heavier disaster upon the Jews; for this impostor, coming into the country, and gaining the reputation of a prophet, gathered together thirty thousand men, who were deceived by him. Having brought them round out of the wilderness, up to the mount of Olives, he intended from thence to make his attack upon Jerusalem; but Felix, coming suddenly upon him with the Roman soldiers, prevented the attack."—A great number, or (as it should rather be rendered) the greatest part, of those that were with him, were either slain or taken prisoners.

In these two passages, the designation of this impostor, an "Egyptian," without the proper name; "the wilderness;" his escape, though his followers were destroyed; the time of the transaction, in the presidentship of Felix, which could not be any long time before the words in Luke are supposed to have been spoken; are circumstances of close correspondency. There is one, and only one, point of disagreement, and that is in the number of his followers, which in the Acts are called four thousand, and by Josephus thirty thousand: but, beside that the names of numbers, more than any other words, are liable to the errors of transcribers, we are in the present instance, under the less concern to reconcile the Evangelist with Josephus, as Josephus, is not, in this point, consistent with himself. For whereas in the passage here quoted, he calls the number thirty thousand, and tells us that the greatest part, or a great number (according as his words are rendered), of those that were with him, were destroyed; in his Antiquities, he represents four hundred to have been killed upon this occasion, and two hundred taken prisoners:* which certainly was, not the "greatest part," nor a "great part," nor "a great number," out of thirty thousand. It is probable also, that Lysias and Josephus spoke of the expedition in its different stages: Lysias, of those who followed the Egyptian out of Jerusalem: Josephus, of all who were collected about him afterward, from different quarters.

XLI. (Lardner's Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, vol. iii. p. 21.) Acts xvii. 22. "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mar's-hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious: for, as I passed by and beheld your devotions, *I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.* Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

Diogenes Laërtius, who wrote about the year 210, in his history of Epimenides, who is supposed to have flourished nearly six hundred years before Christ, relates of him the following story: that, being invited to Athens for the purpose, he delivered the city from a pestilence in this manner;—"Taking several sheep, some black, others white, he had them up to the Areopagus, and then let them go where they would, and gave orders to those who followed them, wherever any of them should lie down, to sacrifice it to the god to whom it belonged; and so the plague ceased.—Hence," says the historian, "it has come to pass, *that to this present time, may be found in the boroughs of the Athenians* ANONYMOUS *altars*: a memorial of the expi-

* Lib. 20. c. 7. sect. 6.

ation then made."* These altars, it may be presumed, were called *anonymous*, because there was not the name of any particular deity inscribed upon them.

Pausanias, who wrote before the end of the second century, in his description of Athens, having mentioned an altar of Jupiter Olympius, adds, "*And nigh unto it is an altar of unknown gods.*"† And in another place, he speaks "*of altars of gods called unknown.*"‡

Philostratus, who wrote in the beginning of the third century, records it as an observation of Apollonius Tyanæus, "That it was wise to speak well of all the gods, *especially at Athens, where altars of unknown demons were erected.*"§

The author of the dialogue Philopatris, by many supposed to have been Lucian, who wrote about the year 170, by others some anonymous Heathen writer of the fourth century, makes Critias swear *by the unknown god of Athens*; and, near the end of the dialogue, has these words, "But let us find out *the unknown God at Athens*, and stretching our hands to heaven, offer to him our praises and thanksgivings."‖

This is a very curious and a very important coincidence. It appears beyond controversy, that altars with this inscription were existing at Athens, at the time when Saint Paul is alleged to have been there. It seems also (which is very worthy of observation), that this inscription was *peculiar* to the Athenians. There is no evidence that there were altars inscribed "to the unknown god" in any other country. Supposing the history of Saint Paul to have been a fable, how is it possible that such a writer as the author of the Acts of the Apostles was, should hit upon a circumstance so extraordinary, and introduce it by an allusion so suitable to Saint Paul's office and character

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THE examples here collected will be sufficient, I hope, to satisfy us, that the writers of the Christian history knew something of what they were writing about. The argument is also strengthened by the following considerations:—

I. That these agreements appear, not only in articles of public history, but sometimes, in minute, recondite, and very peculiar circumstances, in which, of all others, a forger is most likely to have been found tripping.

II. That the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place forty years after the commencement of the Christian institution, produced such a change in the state of the country, and the condition of the Jews, that a writer who was unacquainted with the circumstances of the nation *before* that event, would find it difficult to avoid mistakes, in endeavouring to give detailed accounts of transactions connected with those cir-

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* In Epimenide. l. i. segm. 110.
† Paus. l. v. p. 412. ‡ Paus. li. p. 4.
§ Philos. Apoll. Tyrn. li. vi. c. 3.
‖ Lucian. in Philop. tom. ii. Græv. p. 767. 780.

cumstances, forasmuch as he could no longer have a living examplar to copy from.

III. That there appears, in the writers of the New Testament, a knowledge of the affairs of those times, which we do not find in authors of later ages. In particular, "many of the Christian writers of the second and third centuries, and of the following ages, had false notions concerning the state of Judea, between the nativity of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem."* Therefore *they* could not have composed our histories.

Amidst so many conformities, we are not to wonder that we meet with some difficulties. The principal of these I will put down, together with the solutions which they have received. But in doing this I must be contented with a brevity better suited to the limits of my volume than to the nature of a controversial argument. For the historical proofs of my assertions, and for the Greek criticisms upon which some of them are founded, I refer the reader to the second volume of the first part of Dr. Lardner's large work.

I. The taxing during which Jesus was born, was "first made," as we read, according to our translation, in Saint Luke, "whilst Cyrenius was governor of Syria."† Now it turns out that Cyrenius was not governor of Syria until twelve, or, at the soonest, ten years after the birth of Christ; and that a taxing, census, or assessment, was made in Judea in the beginning of his government. The charge, therefore, brought against the evangelist is, that intending to refer to this taxing, he has misplaced the date of it by an error of ten or twelve years.

The answer to the accusation is found in his using the word "first:" —"And this taxing was *first* made:" for according to the mistake imputed to the evangelist, this word could have no signification whatever; it could have had no place in his narrative: because, let it relate to what it will, taxing, census, enrolment, or assessment, it imports that the writer had more than one of those in contemplation. It acquits him therefore of the charge: it is inconsistent with the supposition of his knowing only of the taxing in the beginning of Cyrenius's government. And if the evangelist knew (which this word proves that he did) of some other taxing beside that, it is too much, for the sake of convicting him of a mistake, to lay it down as certain that he intended to refer to *that*.

The sentence in Saint Luke may be construed thus: "This was the first assessment (or enrolment) of Cyrenius, governor of Cyria;"‡ the words "governor of Syria" being used after the name of Cyrenius as his addition or title. And this title belonging to him at the time of writing the account, was naturally enough subjoined to his name,

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* Lardner, part i. vol. ii. p. 960.

† Chap. ii. ver. 2.

‡ If the word which we render "first" be rendered "before," which it has been strongly contended that the Greek idiom allows of, the whole difficulty vanishes: for then the passage would be,—"Now this taxing was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria;" which corresponds with the chronology. But I rather choose to argue, that however the word "first," be rendered, to give it a meaning at all, it militates with the objection. In this I think there can be no mistake.

though acquired after the transaction which the account describes.

A modern writer who was not very exact in the choice of his expressions, in relating the affairs of the East Indies, might easily say, such a thing was done by *Governor* Hastings; though, in truth, the thing had been done by him before his advancement to the station from which he received the name of governor. And this, as we contend, is precisely the inaccuracy which has produced the difficulty in Saint Luke.

At any rate, it appears from the form of the expression, that he had two taxings or enrolments in contemplation. And if Cyrenius had been sent upon this business into Judea, before he became governor of Syria, (against which supposition there is no proof, but rather external evidence of an enrolment going on about this time under some person or other),* then the census, on all hands acknowledged to have been made by him in the beginning of his government, would form a second, so as to occasion the other to be called the *first*.

II. Another chronological objection arises upon a date assigned in the beginning of the third chapter of Saint Luke.† "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar,"—Jesus *began to be about thirty* years of age: for, supposing Jesus to have been born, as Saint Matthew, and Saint Luke also himself, relate, in the time of Herod, he must, according to the dates given in Josephus and by the Roman historians, have been at least thirty-one years of age in the fifteenth year of Tiberius. If he was born, as Saint Matthew's narrative intimates, one or two years before Herod's death, he would have been thirty-two or thirty-three years old at that time.

This is the difficulty: the solution turns upon an alteration in the construction of the Greek. Saint Luke's words in the original are allowed, by the general opinion of learned men, to signify, not "that Jesus began to be about thirty years of age," but "that he was about thirty years of age when he began his ministry." This construction being admitted, the adverb, "about" gives us all the latitude we want, and more, especially when applied, as it is in the present instance, to a decimal number: for such numbers, even without this qualifying addition, are often used in a laxer sense than is here contended for.‡

III. Acts v. 36. "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four

* Josephus (Antiq. xvii. c. 2. sect. 6.) has this remarkable passage: "When therefore the whole Jewish nation took an oath to be faithful to Cæsar, and the interests of the king." This transaction corresponds in the course of the history with the time of Christ's birth. What is called a census, and which we render taxing, was delivering upon oath an account of their property. This might be accompanied with an oath of fidelity, or might be mistaken by Josephus for it.

† Lardner, part i. vol. ii. p. 768.

‡ Livy, speaking of the peace which the conduct of Romulus had procured to the state, during the *whole* reign of his successor (Numa), has these words:§—"Ab illo enim profectis viribus datis tantum valuit, ut, in *quadraginta* deinde annos, tutam pacem haberet:" yet afterward, in the same chapter, "Romulus, (he says) septem et triginta regnavit annos. Numa tres et quadraginta."

§ Liv. Hist. c. 1. sect. 16.

hundred, joined themselves; who was slain: and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nought."

Josephus has preserved the account of an impostor of the name of Theudas, who created some disturbances, and was slain; but according to the date assigned to this man's appearance, (in which, however, it is very possible that Josephus may have been mistaken),* it must have been, at the least, seven years after Gamaliel's speech, of which this text is a part, was delivered. It has been replied to the objection,† that there might be two impostors of this name: and it has been observed, in order to give a general probability to the solution, that the same thing appears to have happened in other instances of the same kind. It is proved from Josephus, that there were not fewer than four persons of the name of Simon within forty years, and not fewer than three of the name of Judas within ten years, who were all leaders of insurrections: and it is likewise recorded by this historian, that, upon the death of Herod the Great (which agrees very well with the time of the commotion referred to by Gamaliel, and with his manner of stating that time, "before these days"), there were innumerable disturbances in Judea.‡ Archbishop Usher, was of opinion, that one of the three Judases above mentioned was Gamaliel's Theudas;§ and that with a less variation of the name than we actually find in the Gospels, where one of the twelve apostles, is called, by Luke, Judas; and by Mark, Thaddeus.‖ Origen, however he came at his information, appears to have believed that there was an impostor of the name of Theudas before the nativity of Christ.¶

IV. Matt. xxiii. 34. "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of *Zacharius, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.*"

There is a Zacharias, whose death is related in the second book of Chronicles,** in a manner which perfectly supports our Saviour's allusion. But this Zacharias was the son of *Jehoiada.*

There is also Zacharias the prophet; who was the son of Barachiah, and is so described in the superscription of his prophecy, but of whose death we have no account.

I have little doubt, but that the first Zacharias was the person spoken of by our Saviour; and that the name of the father has been

† Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament (Marsh's Translation), vol. i. p. 61.

† Lardner, part i. vol. ii. p. 922.

‡ Antiq. l. xvii. c. 12. sect. 4. § Annals, p. 797.

‖ Luke vi. 16. Mark iii. 18. ¶ Orig. cont. Cels. p. 44.

** And the spirit of God came upon Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you. And they conspired against him, and *stoned him with stones, at the commandment of the king, in the court of the house of the Lord.*" 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.

since added, or changed, by some one, who took it from the title of the prophecy, which happened to be better known to him than the history in the Chronicles.

There is likewise a Zacharias, the son of Baruch, related by Josephus to have been slain in the temple a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem. It has been insinuated, that the words put into our Saviour's mouth contain a reference to this transaction, and were composed by some writer, who either confounded the time of the transaction with our Saviour's age, or inadvertently overlooked the anachronism.

Now suppose it to have been so; suppose these words to have been suggested by the transaction related in Josephus, and to have been falsely ascribed to Christ; and observe what extraordinary coincidences (accidentally, as it must in that case have been) attend the forger's mistake.

First, that we have a Zacharias in the book of Chronicles, whose death, and the manner of it, corresponds with the allusion.

Secondly, that although the name of this person's father be erroneously put down in the Gospel, yet we have a way of accounting for the error, by shewing another Zacharias in the Jewish Scriptures, much better known than the former, whose patronymic was actually that which appears in the text.

Every one who thinks upon the subject, will find these to be circumstances which could not have met together in a mistake, which did not proceed from the circumstances themselves.

I have noticed, I think, all the difficulties of this kind. They are few: some of them admit of a clear, others of a probable solution. The reader will compare them with the number, the variety, the closeness, and the satisfactoriness, of the instances which are to be set against them; and he will remember the scantiness, in many cases, of our intelligence, and that difficulties always attend imperfect information.

CHAPTER VII.

Undesigned coincidences.

BETWEEN the letters which bear the name of Saint Paul in our collection, and his history in the Acts of the Apostles, there exist many notes of correspondency. The simple perusal of the writings is sufficient to prove, that neither the history was taken from the letters, nor the letters from the history. And the *undesignedness* of the agreements (which undesignedness is gathered from their latency, their minuteness, their obliquity, the suitableness of the circumstances in which they consist, to the places in which those circumstances occur, and the circuitous references by which they are traced out) demonstrates that they have not been produced by meditation, or by any fraudulent contrivance. But coincidences, from which these causes are excluded, and which are too close and numerous to be accounted for by accidental concurrences of fiction, must necessarily have truth for their foundation.

This argument appeared to my mind of so much value (especially for its assuming nothing beside the existence of the books), that I have pursued it through Saint Paul's thirteen epistles, in a work published by me four years ago, under the title of Horæ Paulinæ. I am sensible how feeble any argument which depends upon an induction of particulars, is represented without examples. On which account, I wished to have abridged my own volume, in the manner in which I have treated Dr. Lardner's in the preceding chapter. But, upon making the attempt, I did not find it in my power to render the articles intelligible by fewer words than I have there used. I must be content, therefore, to refer the reader to the work itself. And I would particularly invite his attention to the observations which are made in it upon the first three epistles. I persuade myself that he will find the proofs, both of agreement and undesignedness, supplied by these epistles, sufficient to support the conclusion which is there maintained, in favour both of the genuineness of the writings and the truth of the narrative.

It remains only, in this place, to point out how the argument *bears* upon the general question of the Christian history.

First, Saint Paul in these letters affirms, in unequivocal terms, his own performance of miracles, and, what ought particularly to be remembered, "*That miracles were the signs of an apostle.*"* If this testimony come from Saint Paul's own hand, it is invaluable. And that it does so, the argument before us fixes in my mind a firm assurance.

Secondly, it shews that the series of action represented in the epistles of Saint Paul, was real; which alone lays a foundation for the proposition which forms the subject of the first part of our present work, *viz.* that the original witnesses of the Christian history devoted themselves to lives of toil, suffering, and danger, in consequence of their belief of the truth of that history, and for the sake of communicating the knowledge of it to others.

Thirdly, it proves that Luke, or whoever was the author of the Acts of the Apostles (for the argument does not depend upon the name of the author, though I know no reason for questioning it), was well acquainted with Saint Paul's history; and that he probably was, what he professes himself to be, a companion of Saint Paul's travels; which, if true, establishes, in a considerable degree, the credit even of his Gospel, because it shews, that the writer, from his time, situation, and connexions, possessed opportunities of informing himself truly concerning the transactions which he relates. I have little difficulty in applying to the Gospel of Saint Luke what is proved concerning the Acts of the Apostles, considering them as two parts of the same history; for, though there are instances of *second* parts being forgeries, I know none were the second part is genuine, and the first not so.

I will only observe, as a sequel of the argument, though not noticed in my work, the remarkable similitude between the style of Saint John's Gospel, and of Saint John's Epistles. The style of Saint John's is not at all the style of Saint Paul's Epistles, though both are very singular; nor is it the style of Saint James's or of Saint Peter's

* Rom. xv. 18, 19. 2 Cor. xii. 12.

Epistles: but it bears a resemblance to the style of the Gospel inscribed with Saint John's name, so far as that resemblance can be expected to appear which is not in simple narrative, so much as in reflections, and in the representation of discourses. Writings so circumstanced, prove themselves, and one another, to be genuine. This correspondency is the more valuable as the epistle itself asserts, in Saint John's manner indeed, but in terms sufficiently explicit, the writer's personal knowledge of Christ's history: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life; that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you."* Who would not desire,—who perceives not the value of an account, delivered by a writer so well informed as this?

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the history of the resurrection.

THE history of the resurrection of Christ is a part of the evidence of Christianity: but I do not know, whether the proper strength of this passage of the Christian history, or wherein its peculiar value, as a head of evidence, consists, be generally understood. It is not that, as a miracle, the resurrection ought to be accounted a more decisive proof of supernatural agency than other miracles are; it is not that, as it stands in the Gospels, it is better attested than some others; it is not, for either of these reasons, that more weight belongs to it than to other miracles, but for the following, *viz.* That it is completely certain that the apostles of Christ, and the first teachers of Christianity, asserted the fact. And this would have been certain, if the four Gospels had been lost, or never written. Every piece of Scripture recognises the resurrection. Every epistle of every apostle, every author contemporary with the apostles, of the age immediately succeeding the apostles, every writing from that age to the present, genuine or spurious, on the side of Christianity or against it, concur in representing the resurrection of Christ as an article of his history, received without doubt or disagreement by all who called themselves Christians, as alleged from the beginning by the propagators of the institution, and alleged as the centre of their testimony. Nothing, I apprehend, which a man does not himself see or hear, can be more certain to him than this point. I do not mean, that nothing can be more certain than that Christ rose from the dead; but that nothing can be more certain than that his apostles, and the first teachers of Christianity, gave out that he did so. In the other parts of the gospel narrative, a question may be made, whether the things related of Christ be the very things which the apostles and first teachers of the religion delivered concerning him? And this question depends a good deal upon the evidence we possess of the genuineness, or rather, perhaps, of the antiquity, credit, and reception, of the books. On the subject of the resurrection, no such discussion is necessary, because no such doubt can be

* Chap. i. ver. 1—3.

entertained. The only points which can enter into our consideration are, whether the apostles knowingly published a falsehood, or whether they were themselves deceived; whether either of these suppositions be possible. The first, I think, is pretty generally given up. The nature of the undertaking, and of the men; the extreme unlikelihood that such men should engage in such a measure as a *scheme*; their personal toils, and dangers, and sufferings, in the cause; their appropriation of their whole time to the object; the warm, and seemingly unaffected, zeal and earnestness with which they profess their sincerity; exempt their memory from the suspicion of imposture. The solution more deserving of notice, is that which would resolve the conduct of the apostles into *enthusiasm*; which would class the evidence of Christ's resurrection with the numerous stories that are extant of the apparitions of dead men. There are circumstances in the narrative, as it is preserved in our histories, which destroy this comparison entirely. It was not one person, but many, who saw him; they saw him not only separately but together, not only by night but by day, not at a distance but near, not once but several times; they not only saw him, but touched him, conversed with him, ate with him, examined his person to satisfy their doubts. These particulars are decisive: but they stand, I do admit, upon the credit of our records. I would answer, therefore, the insinuation of enthusiasm, by a circumstance which arises out of the nature of the thing; and the reality of which must be confessed by all who allow, what I believe is not denied, that the resurrection of Christ, whether true or false, was asserted by his disciples from the beginning; and that circumstance is, the non-production of the dead body. It is related in the history, what indeed the story of the resurrection necessarily implies, that the corpse was missing out of the sepulchre: it is related also in the history, that the Jews reported that the followers of Christ had stolen it away.* And this account, though loaded with great improbabilities, such as the situation of the disciples, their fears for their own safety at the time, the unlikelihood of their expecting to succeed, the difficulty of actual success,† and the inevitable consequence of detection and failure, was, nevertheless, the most credible account that could be given of the matter. But it proceeds entirely upon the supposition of fraud, as all the old objections did. What account can be given of the body, upon the supposition of enthusiasm? It is impossible our Lord's followers could believe that he was risen from the dead, if his corpse was lying before them. No enthusiasm ever reached to such a

* And this saying (Saint Matthew writes) is commonly reported amongst the Jews until this day." (chap. xxviii. 15.) The evangelist may be thought good authority as to this point, even by those who do not admit his evidence in every other point: and this point is sufficient to prove that the body was missing.

It has been rightly, I think, observed by Dr. Townshend (Dis. upon the Res. p. 128), that the story of the guards carried collusion upon the face of it:—"His disciples came by night, and stole him away, while we slept." Men in their circumstances would not have made such an acknowledgement of their negligence, without previous assurances of protection and impunity.

† "Especially at the full moon, the city full of people, many probably passing the whole night, as Jesus and his disciples had done, in the open air, the sepulchre so near the city as to be now enclosed within the walls." Priestley on the Resurr p. 24.

pitch of extravagancy as that: a spirit may be an illusion; a body is a real thing, an object of sense, in which there can be no mistake. All accounts of spectres leave the body in the grave. And, although the body of Christ might be removed by *fraud*, and for the purposes of fraud, yet, without any such intention, and by sincere but deluded men (which is the representation of the apostolic character we are now examining), no such attempt could be made. The presence and the absence of the dead body are alike inconsistent with the hypothesis of enthusiasm; for, if present, it must have cured their enthusiasm at once; if absent, fraud, not enthusiasm, must have carried it away.

But farther, if we admit, upon the concurrent testimony of all the histories, so much of the account as states that the religion of Jesus was set up at Jerusalem, and set up with asserting, in the very place in which he had been buried, and a few days after he had been buried, his resurrection out of the grave, it is evident that, if his body could have been found, the Jews would have produced it, as the shortest and completest answer possible to the whole story. The attempt of the apostles could not have survived this refutation a moment. If we also admit, upon the authority of Saint Matthew, that the Jews were advertised of the expectation of Christ's followers, and that they had taken due precaution in consequence of this notice, and that the body was in marked and public custody, the observation receives more force still. For, notwithstanding their precaution, and although thus prepared and forewarned; when the story of the resurrection of Christ came forth, as it immediately did; when it was publicly asserted by his disciples, and made the ground and basis of their preaching in his name, and collecting followers to his religion, the Jews had not the body to produce: but were obliged to meet the testimony of the apostles by an answer, not containing indeed any impossibility in itself, but absolutely inconsistent with the supposition of their integrity; that is, in other words, inconsistent with the supposition which would resolve their conduct into enthusiasm.

CHAPTER IX.

The propagation of Christianity.

IN this argument, the first consideration is the fact; in what degree, within what time, and to what extent, Christianity actually was propagated.

The accounts of the matter, which can be collected from our books, are as follows: A *few days* after Christ's disappearance out of the world, we find an assembly of disciples at Jerusalem, to the number of "about one hundred and twenty;"* which hundred and twenty were, probably, a little association of believers, met together, not merely as believers in Christ, but as personally connected with the apostles, and with one another. Whatever was the number of be-

* Acts i. 15.

lievers then in Jerusalem, we have no reason to be surprised that so small a company should assemble: for there is no proof, that the followers of Christ were yet formed into a society; that the society was reduced into any order; that it was at this time even understood that, a new religion (in the sense which that term conveys to us) was to be set up in the world, or how the professors of that religion were to be distinguished from the rest of mankind. The death of Christ had left, we may suppose, the generality of his disciples in great doubt, both as to what they were to do, and concerning what was to follow.

This meeting was holden, as we have already said, a few days after Christ's ascension: for, ten days after that event was the day of Pentecost, when, as our history relates,* upon a signal display of Divine agency attending the persons of the apostles, there were added to the society "about three thousand souls."† But here, it is not, I think, to be taken, that these three thousand were all converted by this single miracle; but rather that many, who before were believers in Christ became now professors of Christianity, that is to say, when they found that a religion was to be established, a society formed and set up in the name of Christ, governed by his laws, avowing their belief in his mission, united amongst themselves, and separated from the rest of the world by visible distinctions; in pursuance of their former conviction, and by virtue of what they had heard and seen and known of Christ's history, they publicly became members of it.

We read in the fourth chapter‡ of the Acts, that, soon after this, "the number of the men," *i. e.* the society openly professing their belief in Christ, "was about five thousand." So that here is an increase of two thousand within a very short time. And it is probable that there were many, both now and afterward, who, although they believed in Christ, did not think it necessary to join themselves to this society; or who waited to see what was likely to become of it. Gamaliel, whose advice to the Jewish council is recorded Acts v. 34, appears to have been of this description; perhaps Nicodemus and perhaps also Joseph of Arimathea. This class of men, their character and their rank, are likewise pointed out by Saint John, in the twelfth chapter of his Gospel: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also, many believed on him: but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Persons such as these, might admit the miracles of Christ, without being immediately convinced that they were under obligation to make a public profession of Christianity, at the risk of all that was dear to them in life, and even of life itself.§

* Acts ii. 1. † Ibid. 41. ‡ Ver. 4.

§ "Beside those who professed, and those who rejected and opposed, Christianity, there were, in all probability, multitudes between both, neither perfect Christians, nor yet unbelievers. They had a favourable opinion of the gospel, but worldly considerations made them unwilling to own it. There were many circumstances which inclined them to think that Christianity was a Divine revelation, but there were many inconveniences which attended the open profession of it: and they could not find in themselves courage enough to bear them, to disoblige their friends and family, to ruin their fortunes, to lose their reputation, their liberty, and their life, for the sake of the new religion. Therefore they were willing to

Christianity, however, proceeded to increase in Jerusalem by a progress equally rapid with its first success; for in the next* chapter of our history, we read that "believers were the more added to the Lord, *multitudes* both of men and women." And this enlargement of the new society appears in the first verse of the succeeding chapter, wherein we are told, that, "when the number of the disciples was *multiplied*, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected:"† and, afterward in the same chapter, it is declared expressly, that, "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and that a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

This I call the first period in the propagation of Christianity. It commences with the ascension of Christ, and extends, as may be collected from incidental notes of time,‡ to something more than one year after that event. During which term, the preaching of Christianity, so far as our documents inform us, was confined to the single city of Jerusalem. And how did it succeed there? The first assembly which we meet with of Christ's disciples, and that a few days after his removal from the world, consisted of "one hundred and twenty." About a week after this, "three thousand were added in one day;" and the number of Christians, publicly baptized, and publicly associating together, was very soon increased to "five thousand." "Multitudes both of men and women continued to be added;" "disciples multiplied greatly;" and "many of the Jewish priesthood, as well as others, became obedient to the faith;" and this within a space of less than two years from the commencement of the institution.

By reason of a persecution raised against the church at Jerusalem, the converts were driven from that city, and dispersed throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.§ Wherever they came, they brought their religion with them: for, our historian informs us,‖ that "they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word." The effect of this preaching comes afterward to be noticed, where the historian is led, in the course of his narrative, to observe, that *then (i. e.* about three years posterior to this,¶) "the churches had rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." This was the work of the second period, which comprises about four years.

Hitherto the preaching of the Gospel had been confined to Jews, to Jewish proselytes, and to Samaritans. And I cannot forbear from setting down in this place, an observation of Mr. Bryant, which appears to me to be perfectly well founded:—"The Jews still remain: but how seldom is it that we can make a single proselyte! There is

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hope, that if they endeavoured to observe the great principles of morality, which Christ had represented as the principal part, the sum and substance of religion; if they thought honourably of the gospel, if they offered no injury to the Christians, if they did them all the services that they could *safely* perform, they were willing to hope, that God would accept this, and that He would excuse and forgive the rest." Jortin's Dis. on the Christ. Rel. p. 91. ed. 4.

* Acts v. 14. † Ibid. vi. 1.

‡ Vide Pearson's Antiq. l. xviii. c. 7. Benson's History of Christ, book i. p. 148.

§ Acts viii. 1. ‖ Ver. 4. ¶ Benson, book i. p. 207.

reason to think, that there were more converted by the apostles in one day, than have since been won over in the last thousand years."*

It was not yet known to the apostles, that they were at liberty to propose the religion to mankind at large. That "mystery," as Saint Paul calls it,† and as it then was, was revealed to Peter by an especial miracle. It appears to have been‡ about seven years after Christ's ascension, that the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles of Cesarea. A year after this, a great multitude of Gentiles were converted at Antioch in Syria. The expressions employed by the historian are these:—"A great number believed, and turned to the Lord;" "much people was added unto the Lord;" "the apostles Barnabas and Paul taught much people."§ Upon Herod's death, which happened in the next year‖, it is observed, that "the word of God grew and multiplied."¶ Three years from this time, upon the preaching of Paul at Iconium, the metropolis of Lycaonia, "a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed:"** and afterward, in the course of this very progress, he is represented as "making many disciples" at Derbe, a principal city in the same district. Three years†† after this, which brings us to sixteen after the ascension, the apostles wrote a public letter from Jerusalem to the Gentile converts in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, with which letter Paul travelled through these countries, and found the churches "established in the faith, and increasing in number daily."‡‡ From Asia, the apostle proceeded into Greece, where soon after his arrival in Macedonia, we find him at Thessalonica; in which city, "some of the Jews believed, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude."§§ We meet also here with an accidental hint of the general progress of the Christian mission, in the exclamation of the tumultuous Jews of Thessalonica, "that they, who had turned the world upside down, were come thither also."‖‖ At Bereal the next city at which Saint Paul arrives, the historian, who was present, informs us that "*many* of the Jews believed."¶¶ The next year and a half of Saint Paul's ministry, was spent at Corinth. Of his success in that city, we receive the following intimations; "that *many* of the Corinthians believed and were baptized;" and "that it was revealed to the apostle by Christ, that he had *much* people in that city."*** Within less than a year after his departure from Corinth, and twenty-five††† years after the ascension, Saint Paul fixed his station at Ephesus, for the space of two years‡‡‡ and something more. The effect of his ministry in that city and neighbourhood drew from the historian a reflection, how "mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."§§§ And at the conclusion of this period, we find Demetrius at the head of a party, who were alarmed by the progress of the religion, complaining that "not only at Ephesus, but also throughout

* Bryant on the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 112.
† Eph. iii. 3—6. ‡ Benson, book ii. p. 236.
§ Acts xi. 21, 24, 26. ‖ Benson; book ii. p. 289.
¶ Acts xii. 24. ** Acts xiv. 1.
†† Benson's History of Christ, book iii. p. 50. ‡‡ Acts xvi. 5.
§§ Ibid. xvii. 4. ‖‖ Ibid. xvii. 6. ¶¶ Ibid. xvii. 12.
*** Ibid. xviii. 8—10. ††† Benson, book iii. p. 160.
‡‡‡ Acts xix. 10. §§§ Ibid. xix. 20

all Asia (*i. e.* the province of Lydia, and the country adjoining to Ephesus), this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people."* Beside these accounts, there occurs, incidentally, mention of converts at Rome, Alexandria, Athens, Cyprus, Cyrene, Macedonia, Philippi.

This is the third period in the propagation of Christianity, setting off in the seventh year after the ascension, and ending at the twenty-eighth. Now, lay these three periods together, and observe how the progress of the religion by these accounts is represented. The institution, which properly *began* only after its author's removal from the world, before the end of thirty years had spread itself through Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, almost all the numerous districts of the Lesser Asia, through Greece, and the islands of the Ægean Sea, the sea-coast of Africa, and had extended itself to Rome, and into Italy. At Antioch in Syria, at Joppa, Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, Berea, Iconium, Derbe, Antioch in Pisidia, at Lydda, Saron, the number of converts is intimated by the expressions, "a great number," "great multitudes," "much people." Converts are mentioned, without any designation of their number,† at Tyre, Cesarea, Troas, Athens, Philippi, Lystra, Damascus. During all this time, Jerusalem continued not only the centre of the mission, but a principal seat of the religion; for when Saint Paul turned thither at the conclusion of the period of which we are now considering the accounts, the other apostles pointed out to him, as a reason for his compliance with their advice, "how many thousands (myriads, ten thousands) there were in that city who believed."‡

Upon this abstract, and the writing from which it is drawn, the following observations seem material to be made:

I. That the account comes from a person, who was himself concerned in a portion of what he relates, and was contemporary with the whole of it; who visited Jerusalem, and frequented the society of those who had acted, and were acting, the chief parts in the transaction. I lay down this point positively; for had the ancient attestations to this valuable record been less satisfactory than they are, the unaffectedness and simplicity with which the author notes his presence upon certain occasions, and the entire absence of art and design from these notices, would have been sufficient to persuade my mind, that whoever he was, he actually lived in the times, and occupied the situation, in which he represents himself to be. When I say "Whoever he was," I do not mean to cast a doubt upon the name to which antiquity hath ascribed the Acts of the Apostles (for there is no cause that I am acquainted with, for questioning it), but to observe

* Acts xix. 26.

† Considering the extreme conciseness of many parts of the history, the silence about the numbers of converts is no proof of their paucity; for at Philippi, no mention whatever is made of the number, yet Saint Paul addressed an epistle to that church. The churches of Galatia, and the affairs of those churches, were considerable enough to be the subject of another letter, and of much of Saint Paul's solicitude: yet no account is preserved in the history of his success, or even of his preaching in that country, except the slight notice which these words convey:—"When they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia,—they essayed to go into Bithynia." Acts xvi. 6.

‡ Acts xxi. 20.

that, in such a case as this, the time and situation of the author is of more importance than his name; and that *these* appear from the work itself, and in the most unsuspicious form.

II. That this account is a very *incomplete* account of the preaching and propagation of Christianity; I mean, that, if what we read in the history be true, much more than what the history contains must be true also. For, although the narrative from which our information is derived, has been entitled the Acts of the Apostles, it is in fact a history of the twelve apostles only, during a short time of their continuing together at Jerusalem; and even of this period the account is very concise. The work afterward consists of a few important passages of Peter's ministry, of the speech and death of Stephen, of the preaching of Philip the deacon; and the sequel of the volume, that is, two-thirds of the whole is taken up with the conversion, the travels, the discourses, and history of the new apostle, Paul; in which history, also, large portions of time are often passed over with very scanty notice.

III. That the account, as far as it goes, is for this very reason more credible. Had it been the author's design to have *displayed* the early progress of Christianity, he would undoubtedly have collected, or, at least, have set forth, accounts of the preaching of the rest of the apostles, who cannot, without extreme improbability, be supposed to have remained silent and inactive, or not to have met with a share of that success which attended their colleagues. To which may be added, as an observation of the same kind,

IV. That the intimations of the number of converts, and of the success of the preaching of the apostles come out for the most part *incidentally;* are drawn from the historian by the occasion; such as the murmuring of the Grecian converts: the rest from persecution; Herod's death; the sending of Barnabas to Antioch, and Barnabas calling Paul to his assistance; Paul coming to a place, and finding there disciples; the clamour of the Jews; the complaint of artificers interested in the support of the popular religion; the reason assigned to induce Paul to give satisfaction to the Christians of Jerusalem. Had it not been for these occasions, it is probable that no notice whatever would have been taken of the number of converts in several of the passages in which that notice now appears. All this tends to remove the suspicion of a design to exaggerate or deceive.

PARALLEL TESTIMONIES with the history, are the letters of Saint Paul, and of the other apostles, which have come down to us. Those of Saint Paul are addressed to the churches of Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, the church of Galatia, and, if the inscription be right, of Ephesus; his ministry at all which places, is recorded in the history: to the church of Colosse, or rather to the churches of Colosse and Laodicea jointly, which he had not then visited. They recognise by reference the churches of Judea, the churches of Asia, and "all the churches of the Gentiles."* In the Epistle to the Romans,† the author is led to deliver a remarkable declaration concerning the extent of his preaching, its efficacy, and the cause to which he ascribes it,—"to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty

* 1 Thess. ii. 14. † Rom. xv. 18; 19.

signs and wonders, by the power of the spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ." In the Epistle to the Colossians,* we find an oblique but very strong signification of the then general state of the Christian mission, at least as it appeared to Saint Paul:—"If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and *which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;* which Gospel, he had reminded them near the beginning† of his letter, "was present with them, *as it was in all the world.*" The expressions are hyperbolical; but they are hyperboles which can be used by a writer who entertained a strong sense of the subject. The first epistle of Peter accosts the Christians dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

It comes next to be considered, how far these accounts are confirmed, or followed up by other evidence.

Tacitus, in delivering a relation, which has already been laid before the reader, of the fire which happened at Rome in the tenth year of Nero (which coincides with the thirtieth year after Christ's ascension), asserts, that the emperor, in order to suppress the rumours of having been himself the author of the mischief, procured the Christians to be accused. Of which Christians, thus brought into his narrative, the following is so much of the historian's account as belongs to our present purpose: "They had their denomination from Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, though checked for a while, broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, but reached the city also. At first, they only were apprehended who confessed themselves of that sect; afterward *a vast multitude* were discovered by them." This testimony to the early propagation of Christianity is extremely material. It is from an historian of great reputation, living near the time; from a stranger and an enemy to the religion; and it joins immediately with the period through which the Scripture accounts extend. It establishes these points: that the religion began at Jerusalem; that it spread throughout Judea; that it had reached Rome, and not only so, but that it had there obtained a great number of converts. This was about six years after the time that Saint Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, and something more than two years after he arrived there himself. The converts to the religion were then so numerous at Rome, that, of those who were betrayed by the information of the persons first persecuted, a great multitude (multitudo ingens) were discovered and seized.

It seems probable, that the temporary check which Tacitus represents Christianity to have received (repressa in præsens) referred to the persecution at Jerusalem, which followed the death of Stephen (Acts viii.); and which, by dispersing the converts, caused the institution, in some measure, to disappear. Its second eruption at the same

* Col. i. 23. † Ibid. 6.

place, and within a short time, has much in it of the character of truth. It was the firmness and perseverance of men who knew what they relied upon.

Next in order of time, and perhaps superior in importance, is the testimony of Pliny the Younger. Pliny was the Roman governor of Pontus and Bithynia, two considerable districts in the northern part of Asia Minor. The situation in which he found his province, led him to apply to the emperor (Trajan) for his direction as to the conduct he was to hold towards the Christians. The letter in which this application is contained, was written, not quite eighty years after Christ's ascension. The president, in this letter, states the measures he had already pursued, and then adds, as his reason for resorting to the emperor's counsel and authority, the following words:—"Suspending all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared to me a matter highly deserving consideration, especially on account of the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering: for, many of all ages, and of every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country. Nevertheless it seemed to me, that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin to be more frequented; and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived. Victims, likewise, are every where (passim) bought up; whereas, for some time, there were few to purchase them. Whence it is easy to imagine, that numbers of men might be reclaimed, if pardon were granted to those that shall repent."*

It is obvious to observe, that the passage of Pliny's letter, here quoted, proves, not only that the Christians in Pontus and Bithynia were now numerous, but that they had subsisted there for some considerable time. "It is certain," he says, "that the temples, which were almost forsaken (plainly ascribing this desertion of the popular worship to the prevalency of Christianity), begin to be more frequented, and the sacred solemnities, after a *long* intermission, are revived." There are also two clauses in the former part of the letter which indicate the same thing; one, in which he declares that he had "never been present at any trials of Christians, and therefore knew not what was the usual subject of inquiry and punishment, or how far either was wont to be urged." The second clause is the following: "Others were named by an informer, who, at first, confessed themselves Christians, and afterward denied it; the rest said, they had been Christians, some three years ago, some longer, and some about twenty years." It is also apparent, that Pliny speaks of the Christians as a description of men well known to the person to whom he writes. His first sentence concerning them is, "I have never been present at the trials of Christians." This mention of the name of Christians, without any preparatory explanation, shews that it was a term familiar both to the writer of the letter, and the person to whom it was addressed. Had it not been so, Pliny would naturally have begun his letter by informing the emperor, that he had met with a certain set of men in the province, called Christians.

* C. Plin. Trajano Imp. lib. x. ep. xcvii.

Here then is a very singular evidence of the progress of the Christian religion in a short space. It was not fourscore years after the crucifixion of Jesus, when Pliny wrote this letter; nor seventy years since the apostles of Jesus began to mention his name to the Gentile world. Bithynia and Pontus were at a great distance from Judea, the centre from which the religion spread; yet in these provinces, Christianity had long subsisted, and Christians were now in such numbers as to lead the Roman governor to report to the emperor, that they were found not only in cities, but in villages and in open countries; of all ages, of every rank and condition; that they abounded so much, as to have produced a visible desertion of the temples; that beasts brought to market for victims, had few purchasers; that the sacred solemnities were much neglected:—circumstances noted by Pliny, for the express purpose of shewing to the emperor the effect and prevalency of the new institution.

No evidence remains, by which it can be proved that the Christians were more numerous in Pontus and Bithynia than in other parts of the Roman empire; nor has any reason been offered to shew why they should be so. Christianity did not begin in these countries nor near them. I do not know, therefore, that we ought to confine the description in Pliny's letter to the state of Christianity in those provinces, even if no other account of the same subject had come down to us; but, certainly, this letter may fairly be applied in aid and confirmation of the representations given of the general state of Christianity in the world by Christian writers of that and the next succeeding age.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about thirty years after Pliny, and one hundred and six after the Ascension, has these remarkable words: "There is not a nation, either of Greek or Barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes, and live in tents, amongst whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the Universe by the name of the crucified Jesus."* Tertullian, who comes about fifty years after Justin, appeals to the governors of the Roman empire in these terms: "We were but of yesterday, and we have filled your cities, islands, towns, and boroughs, the camp, the senate, and the forum. They (the heathen adversaries of Christianity) lament that every sex, age, and condition, and persons of every rank also, are converts to that name."† I do allow, that these expressions are loose, and may be called declamatory. But even declamation hath its bounds; this public boasting upon a subject which must be known to every reader was not only useless but unnatural, unless the truth of the case, in a considerable degree, correspond with the description; at least, unless it had been both true and notorious, that great multitudes of Christians, of all ranks and orders, were to be found in most parts of the Roman empire. The same Tertullian, in another passage, by way of setting forth the extensive diffusion of Christianity, enumerates as belonging to Christ, beside many other countries, the "Moors and Gætulians of Africa, the borders of Spain, several nations of France, and parts of Britain, inaccessible to the Romans, the Samaritans, Daci, Germans, and Scy-

* Dial cum Tryph. † Tertull. Apol. c. 37.

thians;"* and, which is more material than the extent of the institution, the *number* of Christians in the several countries in which it prevailed, is thus expressed by him: "Although so great a multitude that in almost every city we form the greater part, we pass our time modestly and in silence."† Clemens Alexandrinus, who preceded Tertullian by a few years, introduces a comparison between the success of Christianity, and that of the most celebrated philosophical institutions: "The philosophers were confined to Greece, and to their particular retainers; but the doctrine of the Master of Christianity did not remain in Judea, as philosophy did in Greece, but it spread throughout the whole world, in every nation and village, and city, both of Greeks and Barbarians, converting both whole houses and separate individuals, having already brought over to the truth not a few of the philosophers themselves. If the Greek philosophy be prohibited, it immediately vanishes; whereas, from the first preaching of our doctrine, kings and tyrants, governors and presidents, with their whole train, and with the populace on their side, have endeavoured with their whole might to exterminate it, yet doth it flourish more and more."‡ Origen, who follows Tertullian at the distance of only thirty years, delivers nearly the same account: "In every part of the world (says he), throughout all Greece, and in all other nations, there are innumerable and immense multitudes, who, having left the laws of their country, and those whom they esteemed gods, have given themselves up to the law of Moses, and the religion of Christ: and this not without the bitterest resentment from the idolaters, by whom they are frequently put to torture, and sometimes to death: and it is wonderful to observe, how, in so short a time, the religion has increased, amidst punishment and death, and every kind of torture."§ In another passage, Origen draws the following candid comparison between the state of Christianity in his time, and the condition of its more primitive ages: "By the good providence of God, the Christian religion has so flourished and increased continually, that it is now preached freely without molestation, although there were a thousand obstacles to the spreading of the doctrine of Jesus in the world. But as it was the will of God that the Gentiles should have the benefit of it, all the counsels of men against the Christians were defeated: and by how much the more emperors and governors of provinces, and the people every where, strove to depress them; so much the more have they increased, and prevailed exceedingly."‖

It is well known, that within less than eighty years after this, the Roman empire became Christian under Constantine: and it is probable that Constantine declared himself on the side of the Christians, because they were the powerful party; for Arnobius, who wrote immediately before Constantine's accession, speaks of the whole world as filled with Christ's doctrine, of its diffusion throughout all countries, of an innumerable body of Christians in distant provinces, of the strange revolution of opinion of men of the greatest genius, orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, having come over to

* Ad. Jud. c. 7. † Ad Scap. c. 111.
‡ Clem. Al. Strom. lib. vi. ad. fin. § Orig. in Cels. lib. i.
‖ Orig. cont. Cels. lib. vii.

he institution, and that also in the face of threats, executions, and tortures.* And not more than twenty years after Constantine's entire possession of the empire, Julius Firmicus Maternus calls upon the emperors Constantius and Constans to extirpate the relics of the ancient religion; the reduced and fallen condition of which is described by our author in the following words: Licèt adhuc in quibusdam regionibus idololatriæ morientia palpitent membra; tamen in eo res est, ut à Christianis omnibus terris pestiferum hoc malum funditùs amputetur:" and in another place, "Modicum tantùm superest, ut legibus vestris—extincta idololatriæ pereat funesta contagio."† It will not be thought that we quote this writer in order to recommend his temper or his judgment, but to shew the comparative state of Christianity and of Heathenism at this period. Fifty years afterward, Jerome represents the decline of Paganism in language which conveys the same idea of its approaching extinction: "Solitudinem patitur et in urbe gentilitas. Dii quondam nationum, cum bubonibus et noctuis, in solis culminibus remanserunt."‡ Jerome here indulges a triumph, natural and allowable in a zealous friend of the cause, but which could only be suggested to his mind by the consent and universality with which he saw the religion received. "But now (says he), the passion and resurrection of Christ are celebrated in the discourses and writings of all nations. I need not mention Jews, Greeks, and Latins. The Indians, Persians, Goths, and Egyptians, philosophize, and firmly believe the immortality of the soul, and future recompenses, which, before, the greatest philosophers had denied, or doubted of, or perplexed with their disputes. The fierceness of Thracians and Scythians is now softened by the gentle sound of the Gospel; and every where Christ is all in all."§ Were therefore the motives of Constantine's conversion ever so problematical, the easy establishment of Christianity, and the ruin of Heathenism under him and his immediate successors, is of itself a proof of the progress which Christianity had made in the preceding period. It may be added also, "that Maxentius, the rival of Constantine, had shewn himself friendly to the Christians. Therefore of those who were contending for worldly power and empire, one actually favoured and flattered them, and another may be suspected to have joined himself to them, partly from consideration of interest: so considerable were they become, under external disadvantages of all sorts."‖ This at least is certain, that throughout the whole transaction hitherto, the great seemed to follow, not to lead, the public opinion.

It may help to convey to us some notion of the extent and progress of Christianity, or rather of the character and quality of many early Christians, of their learning and their labours, to notice the number of Christian *writers* who flourished in these ages. Saint Jerome's catalogue contains *sixty-six* writers within the first three centuries, and the first six years of the fourth; and *fifty-four* between that time and his own, *viz.* A. D. 392. Jerome introduces his catalogue with the following just remonstrance:—"Let those who say the church has had no

* Arnob. in Gentes, l. i. p. 27, 9, 24, 42, 44. edit. Lug. Bat. 1650.
† De Error. Profan. Relig. c. xxi. p. 172, quoted by Lardner, vol. viii. p. 262.
‡ Jer. ad Lect. ep. 5, 7. § Jer. ep. 8. ad Heliod.
‖ Lardner, vol. vii. p. 380.

philosophers, nor eloquent and learned men, observe who and what they were who founded, established, and adorned it: let them cease to accuse our faith of rusticity, and confess their mistake."* Of these writers, several, as Justin, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Bardesanes, Hippolitus, Eusebius, were voluminous writers. Christian writers abounded particularly about the year 178. Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, founded a library in that city, A. D. 212. Pamphilus, the friend of Origen, founded a library at Cesarea, A. D. 294. Public defences were also set forth, by various advocates of the religion, in the course of its first three centuries. Within one hundred years after Christ's ascension, Quadratus and Aristides, whose works, except some few fragments of the first, are lost; and, about twenty years afterward, Justin Martyr, whose works remain, presented apologies for the Christian religion to the Roman emperors; Quadratus and Aristides to Adrian, Justin to Antoninus Pius, and a second to Marcus Antoninus. Melito, bishop of Sardis, and Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, and Miltiades, men of great reputation, did the same to Marcus Antoninus, twenty years afterward:† and ten years after this, Apollonius, who suffered martyrdom under the emperor Commodus, composed an apology for his faith, which he read in the senate, and which was afterward published.‡ Fourteen years after the apology of Apollonius, Tertullian addressed the work which now remains under that name to the governors of provinces in the Roman empire; and, about the same time, Minucius Felix composed a defence of the Christian religion, which is still extant; and, shortly after the conclusion of this century, copious defences of Christianity were published by Arnobius and Lactantius.

SECT. II.

Reflections upon the preceding account.

IN viewing the progress of Christianity, our first attention is due to the number of converts at Jerusalem, immediately after its founder's death; because this success was a success at the *time*, and upon the *spot*, when and where the chief part of the history had been transacted.

We are, in the next place, called upon to attend to the early establishment of numerous Christian societies in Judea and Galilee; which countries had been the scene of Christ's miracles and ministry, and where the memory of what had passed, and the knowledge of what was alleged, must have yet been fresh and certain.

We are, thirdly, invited to recollect the success of the apostles and of their companions, at the several places to which they came, both within and without Judea; because it was the credit given to original witnesses, appealing for the truth of their accounts to what them-

* Jer. Prol. in Lib. de Scr. Eccl.
† Euseb. Hist. lib. iv. c. 26. See also Lardner, vol. ii. p. 666.
‡ Lardner, vol. ii. p. 687.

selves had seen and heard. The effect also of their preaching strongly confirms the truth of what our history positively and circumstantially relates, that they were able to exhibit to their hearers supernatural attestations of their mission.

We are, lastly, to consider the *subsequent* growth and spread of the religion, of which we receive successive intimations, and satisfactory, though general and occasional, accounts, until its full and final establishment.

In all these several stages, the history is without a parallel: for it must be observed, that we have not now been tracing the progress, and describing the prevalency, of an opinion, founded upon philosophical or critical arguments, upon mere deduction of reason, or the construction of ancient writings (of which kind are the several theories which have, at different times, gained possession of the public mind in various departments of science and literature; and of one or other of which kind are the tenets also which divide the various sects of Christianity;) but that we speak of a system, the very basis and postulatum of which was a supernatural character ascribed to a particular person; of a doctrine, the truth whereof depends entirely upon the truth of a matter of fact then recent. "To establish a new religion, even amongst a few people, or in one single nation, is a thing in itself exceedingly difficult. To reform some corruptions which may have spread in a religion, or to make new regulations in it, is not perhaps so hard, when the main and principal part of that religion is preserved entire and unshaken; and yet this very often cannot be accomplished without an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances, and may be attempted a thousand times without success. But to introduce a new faith, a new way of thinking and acting, and to persuade many nations to quit the religion in which their ancestors have lived and died, which had been delivered down to them from time immemorial, to make them forsake and despise the deities which they had been accustomed to reverence and worship; this is a work of still greater difficulty."* The resistance of education, worldly policy, and superstition, is almost invincible.

If men, in these days, be Christians in consequence of their education, in submission to authority, or in compliance with fashion, let us recollect that the very contrary of this, at the beginning, was the case. The first race of Christians, as well as millions who succeeded them, became such in formal opposition to all these motives, to the whole power and strength of this influence. Every argument, therefore, and every instance, which sets forth the prejudice of education, and the almost irresistible effects of that prejudice (and no persons are more fond of expatiating upon this subject than deistical writers), in fact confirms the evidence of Christianity.

But, in order to judge of the argument which is drawn from the early propagation of Christianity, I know no fairer way of proceeding, than to compare what we have seen on the subject, with the success of Christian missions in modern ages. In the East India mission, supported by the society for promoting Christian Knowledge, we hear

* Jortin's Dis. on the Christ. Rel. p. 107. ed. iv.

sometimes of thirty, sometimes of forty, being baptized in the course of a year, and these principally children. Of converts, properly so called, that is, of adults voluntarily embracing Christianity, the number is extremely small. "Notwithstanding the labour of missionaries for upwards of two hundred years, and the establishments of different Christian nations who support them, there are not twelve thousand Indian Christians, and those almost entirely outcasts."*

I lament, as much as any man, the little progress which Christianity has made in these countries, and the inconsiderable effect that has followed the labours of its missionaries: but I see in it a strong proof of the Divine origin of the religion. What had the apostles to assist them in propagating Christianity which the missionaries have not? If piety and zeal had been sufficient, I doubt not but that our missionaries possess these qualities in a high degree: for, nothing except piety and zeal could engage them in the undertaking. If sanctity of life and manners was the allurement, the conduct of these men is unblamable. If the advantage of education and learning be looked to, there is not one of the modern missionaries, who is not, in this respect, superior to all the apostles: and that not only absolutely, but, what is of more importance, *relatively*, in comparison, that is, with those amongst whom they exercise their office. If the intrinsic excellency of the religion, the perfection of its morality, the purity of its precepts, the eloquence or tenderness or sublimity of various parts of its writings, were the recommendations by which it made its way, these remain the same. If the character and circumstances, under which the preachers were introduced to the countries in which they taught, be accounted of importance, this advantage is all on the side of the modern missionaries. They come from a country and a people to which the Indian world look up with sentiments of deference. The apostles came forth amongst the Gentiles under no other name than that of Jews, which was precisely the character they despised and derided. If it be disgraceful in India to become a Christian, it could not be much less so to be enrolled amongst those "quos per flagitia invisos vulgos Christianos appellabat." If the religion which they had to encounter be considered, the difference, I apprehend, will not be great. The theology of both was nearly the same: "what is supposed to be performed by the power of Jupiter, of Neptune, of Æolus, of Mars, of Venus, according to the mythology of the West, is ascribed in the East, to the agency of Agrio the god of fire, Varoon the god of oceans, Vayoo the god of wind, Cama the god of love."† The sacred rites of the Western Polytheism were gay, festive, and licentious: the rites of the public religion in the East partake of the same character, with a more avowed indecency. "In every function performed in the pagodas, as well as in every public procession, it is the office of these women (*i. e.* of women prepared by the Brahmins for the purpose), to dance before the idol, and to sing hymns in his praise; and it is difficult to say whether they trespass most against decency by the

* Sketches relating to the history, learning, and manners, of the Hindoos, p. 48; quoted by Dr. Robertson, Hist. Dis. concerning ancient India, p. 236.

† Baghvat Geeta, p. 94, quoted by Dr. Robertson, Ind. Dis. p. 306.

gestures they exhibit, or by the verses which they recite. The walls of the pagodas are covered with paintings in a style no less indelicate."*

On both sides of the comparison, the popular religion had a strong establishment. In ancient Greece and Rome, it was strictly incorporated with the state. The magistrate was the priest. The highest officers of government bore the most distinguished part in the celebration of the public rites. In India, a powerful and numerous cast possess exclusively the administration of the established worship; and are, of consequence, devoted to the service, and attached to its interest. In both, the prevailing mythology was destitute of any proper evidence: or rather, in both, the origin of the tradition is run up into ages long anterior to the existence of credible history, or of written language. The Indian chronology computes eras by millions of years, and the life of man by thousands :† and in these, or prior to these, is placed the history of their divinities. In both, the established superstition held the same place in the public opinion; that is to say, in both it was credited by the bulk of the people,‡ but by the learned and philosophical part of the community, either derided, or regarded by them as only fit to be upholden for the sake of its political uses.§

Or if it should be allowed, that the ancient heathens believed in their religion less generally than the present Indians do, I am far from thinking that this circumstance would afford any facility to the work of the apostles, above that of the modern missionaries. To me it ap-

* Others of the deities of the East are of an austere and gloomy character, to be propitiated by victims, sometimes by human sacrifices, and by voluntary torments of the most excruciating kind.—Voyage de Gentil. vol. p. 244—260. Preface to Code of Gentoo Laws, p. 57. quoted by Dr. Robertson, p. 320.

† The Suffec Jogue, or age of purity, is said to have lasted three million two hundred thousand years; and they hold that the life of man was extended in that age to one hundred thousand years: but there is a difference amongst the Indian writers, of six millions of years in the computation of this era." Ib.

‡ "How absurd soever the articles of faith may be, which superstition has adopted, or how unhallowed the rites which it prescribes, the former are received, in every age and country, with unhesitating assent, by the great body of the people, and the latter observed with scrupulous exactness. In our reasonings concerning opinions and practices which differ widely from our own, we are extremely apt to err. Having been instructed ourselves in the principles of a religion, worthy in every respect of that Divine Wisdom by which they were dictated, we frequently express wonder at the credulity of nations, in embracing systems of belief which appear to us so directly repugnant to right reason; and sometimes suspect, that tenets so wild and extravagant do not really gain credit with them. But experience may satisfy us that neither our wonder nor suspicions are well founded. No article of the public religion was called in question by those people of ancient Europe with whose history we are best acquainted; and no practice, which it enjoined, appeared improper to them. On the other hand, every opinion that tended to diminish the reverence of men for the gods of their country, or to alienate them from their worship, excited, among the Greeks and Romans that indignant zeal which is natural to every people attached to their religion by a firm persuasion of its truth." Ind. Dis. p 321..

§ That the learned Brahmins of the East are rational Theists, and secretly reject the established theory, and contemn the rites that were founded upon them. or rather consider them as contrivances to be supported for their political uses, see Dr. Robertson's Ind. Dis. p. 324—334.

pears, and I think it material to be remarked, that a disbelief of the established religion of their country has no tendency to dispose men for the reception of another: but that, on the contrary, it generates a settled contempt of all religious pretensions whatever. General infidelity is the hardest soil which the propagators of a new religion can have to work upon. Could a Methodist or a Moravian promise himself a better chance of success with a French *esprit fort*, who had been accustomed to laugh at the popery of his country, than with a believing Mahometan or Hindoo? Or are our modern unbelievers in Christianity, for that reason, in danger of becoming Mahometans or Hindoos? It does not appear that the Jews, who had a body of historical evidence to offer for their religion, and who at that time undoubtedly entertained and held forth the expectation of a future state, derived any great advantage, as to the extension of their system, from the discredit into which the popular religion had fallen with many of their heathen neighbours.

We have particularly directed our observations to the state and progress of Christianity amongst the inhabitants of *India*: but the history of the Christian mission in other countries, where the efficacy of the mission is left solely to the conviction wrought by the preaching of strangers, presents the same idea, as the Indian mission does, of the feebleness and inadequacy of human means. About twenty-five years ago, was published in England a translation from the Dutch, of a History of Greenland, and a relation of the mission for above thirty years carried on in that country by the Unitas Fratrum, or Moravians. Every part of that relation confirms the opinion we have stated. Nothing could surpass, or hardly equal, the zeal and patience of the missionaries. Yet their historian, in the conclusion of his narrative, could find place for no reflections more encouraging than the following:—"A person that had known the heathen, that had seen the little benefit from the great pains hitherto taken with them, and considered that one after another had abandoned all hopes of the conversion of those infidels (and some thought that they would never be converted, till they saw miracles wrought as in the apostle's days, and this the Greenlanders expected and demanded of their instructors): one that considered this, I say, would not so much wonder at the past unfruitfulness of these young beginners, as at their steadfast perseverance in the midst of nothing but distress, difficulties, and impediments, internally and externally: and that they never desponded of the conversion of those poor creatures amidst all seeming impossibilities."*

From the widely disproportionate effects which attend the preaching of modern missionaries of Christianity, compared with what followed the ministry of Christ and his apostles under circumstances either alike, or not so unlike, as to account for the difference, a conclusion is fairly drawn, in support of what our histories deliver concerning them, *viz.* that they possessed means of conviction, which we have not; that they had proofs to appeal to, which we want.

* History of Greenland, vol. ii. p. 376

SECT. III.

Of the religion of Mahomet.

THE only event in the history of the human species, which admits of comparison with the propagation of Christianity, is the success of Mahometanism. The Mahometan institution, was rapid in its progress, was recent in its history, and was founded upon a supernatural or prophetic character assumed by its author. In these articles, the resemblance with Christianity is confessed. But there are points of difference, which separate, we apprehend, the two cases entirely.

I. Mahomet did not found his pretensions upon miracles, properly so called; that is, upon proofs of supernatural agency, capable of being known and attested by others. Christians are warranted in this assertion by the evidence of the Koran, in which Mahomet not only does not affect the power of working miracles, but expressly disclaims it. The following passages of that book furnish direct proofs of the truth of what we allege:—"The infidels say, Unless a sign be sent down unto him from his Lord, we will not believe; thou art a preacher only."* Again; "Nothing hindered us from sending *thee* with miracles, except that the former nations have charged them with imposture."† And lastly; "They say, Unless a sign be sent down unto him from his Lord, we will not believe; Answer: "Signs are in the power of God alone, and I am no more than a public preacher. Is it not sufficient for them, that we have sent down unto them ?"‡ Besides these acknowledgements, I have observed thirteen distinct places, in which Mahomet puts the objection (unless a sign, &c.) into the mouth of the unbeliever, in not one of which does he allege a miracle in reply. His answer is, "That God giveth the power of working miracles, when and to whom he pleaseth"§ "that if he should work miracles, they would not believe;"‖ "that they had before rejected Moses, and Jesus, and the Prophets, who wrought miracles;"¶ "that the Koran itself was a miracle."**

The only place in the Koran in which it can be pretended that a sensible miracle is referred to (for I do not allow the secret visitations of Gabriel, the night journey of Mahomet to heaven, or the presence in battle of invisible hosts of angels, to deserve the name of *sensible* miracles), is the beginning of the fifty-fourth chapter. The words are these: "The hour of judgment approacheth, *and the moon hath been split in sunder:* but if the unbelievers see a sign, they turn aside, saying, This is a powerful charm." The Mahometan expositors disagree in their interpretation of this passage; some explaining it to be a mention of the splitting of the moon, as one of the future signs of the approach of the day of judgment; others referring it to a miraculous appearance which had then taken place.†† It seems to me

* Sale's Koran, c. xiii. p. 201. ed. quarto.
† Ch. xvii. p. 232.
‡ Sale's Koran, c. xxix. p. 328. ed. quarto.
§ Ch. v. x. xiii. twice. ‖ Ch. vi.
¶ Ch. iii. xxi. xxviii. ** Ch. xvi.
†† Vide Sale, in loc.

not improbable, that Mahomet might have taken advantage of some extraordinary halo, or other unusual appearance of the moon, which had happened about this time; and which supplied a foundation both for this passage, and for the story which in after times had been raised out of it.

After this more than silence, after these authentic *confessions* of the Koran, we are not to be moved with miraculous stories related of Mahomet by Abulfeda, who wrote his life about six hundred years after his death; or which are found in the legend of Al Jannabi, who came two hundred years later.* On the contrary, from comparing what Mahomet himself wrote and said with what was afterward reported of him by his followers, the plain and fair conclusion is, that when the religion was established by conquest, then, and not till then, came out the stories of his miracles.

Now this difference alone constitutes, in my opinion, a bar to all reasoning from one case to the other. The success of a religion founded upon a miraculous history, shews the credit which was given to the history; and this credit, under the circumstances in which it was given, *i. e.* by persons capable of knowing the truth, and interested to inquire after it, is evidence of the reality of the history, and, by consequence of the truth of the religion. Where a miraculous history is not alleged, no part of this argument can be applied. We admit, that multitudes acknowledged the pretensions of Mahomet: but, these pretensions being destitute of miraculous evidence, we know that the grounds upon which they were acknowledged, could not be secure grounds of persuasion to his followers, nor their example any authority to us. Admit the whole of Mahomet's authentic history, so far as it was of a nature capable of being known or witnessed by others, to be true (which is certainly to admit all that the reception of the religion can be brought to prove), and Mahomet might still be an impostor, or enthusiast, or a union of both. Admit to be true almost any part of Christ's history, of that, I mean, which was public, and within the cognizance of his followers, and he must have come from God. Where matter of fact is not in question, where miracles are not alleged, I do not see that the progress of a religion is a better argument of its truth, than the prevalency of any system of opinions in natural religion, morality, or physics, is a proof of the truth of those opinions. And we know that this sort of argument is inadmissible in any branch of philosophy whatever.

But it will be said, If one religion could make its way without miracles, why might not another? To which I reply, first, that this is not the question; the proper question is not, whether a religious institution could be set up without miracles, but whether a religion, or a change of religion, founding itself in miracles, could succeed without any reality to rest upon? I apprehend these two cases to be very

* It does not, I think, appear, that these historians had any written accounts to appeal to, more ancient than the Sonnah; which was a collection of traditions made by order of the Caliphs two hundred years after Mahomet's death. Mahomet died A. D. 632; Al-Bochari, one of the six doctors who compiled the Sonnah, was born A. D. 809; died 869. Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 192. ed. 7th.

different; and I apprehend Mahomet's not taking this course, to be one proof, amongst others, that the thing is difficult, if not impossible, to be accomplished: certainly it was not from an unconsciousness of the value and importance of miraculous evidence: for it is very observable, that in the same volume, and sometimes in the same chapters, in which Mahomet so repeatedly disclaims the power of working miracles himself, he is incessantly referring to the miracles of preceding prophets. One would imagine, to hear some men talk, or to read some books, that the setting up of a religion by dint of miraculous pretences was a thing of every day's experience; whereas I believe, that, except the Jewish and Christian religion, there is no tolerably well authenticated account of any such thing having been accomplished.

II. The establishment of Mahomet's religion was effected by causes which in no degree appertained to the origin of Christianity.

During the first twelve years of his mission, Mahomet had recourse only to persuasion. This is allowed. And there is sufficient reason from the effect to believe, that, if he had confined himself to this mode of propagating his religion, we of the present day should never have heard either of him or it. "Three years were silently employed in the conversion of *fourteen* proselytes. For ten years, the religion advanced with a slow and painful progress, within the walls of Mecca. The number of proselytes in the seventh year of his mission may be estimated by the absence of *eighty-three* men and eighteen women, who retired to Ethiopia."* Yet this progress, such as it was, appears to have been aided by some very important advantages which Mahomet found in his situation, in his mode of conducting his design, and in his doctrine.

1. Mahomet was the grandson of the most powerful and honourable family in Mecca: and although the early death of his father had not left him a patrimony suitable to his birth, he had, long before the commencement of his mission, repaired this deficiency by an opulent marriage. A person considerable by his wealth, of high descent, and nearly allied to the chiefs of his country, taking upon himself the character of a religious teacher, would not fail of attracting attention and followers.

2. Mahomet conducted his design, in the outset especially, with great art and prudence. He conducted it as a politician would conduct a plot. His first application was to his own family. This gained him his wife's uncle, a considerable person in Mecca, together with his cousin Ali, afterward the celebrated Caliph, then a youth of great expectation, and even already distinguished by his attachment, impetuosity, and courage."† He next expressed himself to Abu

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* Gibbon's Hist. vol. ix. p. 244, &c.; ed. Dub.

† Of which Mr. Gibbon has preserved the following specimen:—"When Mahomet called out in an assembly of his family, Who among you will be my companion and my vizir? Ali, then only in the fourteenth year of his age, suddenly replied, O prophet! I am the man;—whosoever rises against thee, I will dash out his teeth, tear out his eyes, break his legs, rip up his belly. O prophet! I will be thy vizir over them." Vol. ix. p. 245.

Becr, a man amongst the first of the Koreish in wealth and influence. The interest and example of Abu Becr drew in five other principal persons in Mecca, whose solicitations prevailed upon five more of the same rank. This was the work of three years; during which time every thing was transacted in secret. Upon the strength of these allies, and under the powerful protection of his family, who, however, some of them might disapprove his enterprise, or deride his pretensions, would not suffer the orphan of their house, the relic of their favourite brother, to be insulted; Mahomet now commenced his public preaching. And the advance which he made during the nine or ten remaining years of his peaceable ministry, was by no means greater than what, with these advantages, and with the additional and singular circumstance of there being no *established* religion at Mecca at that time to contend with, might reasonably have been expected. How soon his primitive adherents were let into the secret of his views of empire, or in what stage of his undertaking these views first opened themselves to his own mind, it is not now easy to determine. The event however was, that these his first proselytes all ultimately attained to riches and honours, to the command of armies, and the government of kingdoms.*

3. The Arabs deduced their descent from Abraham through the line of Ishmael. The inhabitants of Mecca in common probably with the other Arabian tribes, acknowledged, as, I think, may clearly be collected from the Koran, one supreme Deity, but had associated with him many objects of idolatrous worship. The great doctrine with which Mahomet set out, was the strict and exclusive unity of God. Abraham, he told them, their illustrious ancestor; Ishmael, the father of their nation; Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews; and Jesus, the author of Christianity; had all asserted the same thing; that their followers had universally corrupted the truth, and that *he* was now commissioned to restore it to the world. Was it to be wondered at, that a doctrine so specious, and authorized by names, some or other of which were holden in the highest veneration by every description of his hearers, should, in the hands of a popular missionary, prevail to the extent in which Mahomet succeeded by his pacific ministry?

4. Of the institution which Mahomet joined with this fundamental doctrine, and of the Koran in which that institution is delivered, we discover, I think, two purposes that pervade the whole, *viz.* to make converts, and to make his converts soldiers. The following particulars, amongst others, may be considered as pretty evident indications of these designs:

1. When Mahomet began to preach, his address to the Jews, to the Christians, and to the Pagan Arabs, was, that the religion which he taught, was no other than what had been originally their own.—"We believe in God, and that which hath been sent down unto us, and that which hath been sent down unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Tribes, and that which was delivered unto

* Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 244.

Moses and Jesus, and that which was delivered unto the prophets from their Lord: we make no distinction between any of them."* "He hath ordained you the religion which he commanded Noah, and which we have revealed unto thee, O Mohammed, and which we commanded Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, saying, Observe this religion, and be not divided therein."† He hath chosen you, and hath not imposed on you any difficulty in the religion which he hath given you, the religion of your father Abraham."‡

2. The author of the Koran never ceases from describing the future anguish of unbelievers, their despair, regret, penitence, and torment. It is the point which he labours above all others. And these descriptions are conceived in terms which will appear in no small degree impressive, even to the modern reader of an English translation. Doubtless they would operate with much greater force upon the minds of those to whom they were immediately directed. The terror which they seem well calculated to inspire, would be to many tempers a powerful application.

3. On the other hand; his voluptuous paradise; his robes of silk, his palaces of marble, his rivers and shades, his groves and couches, his wines, his dainties; and, above all, his seventy-two virgins, assigned to each of the faithful, of resplendent beauty and eternal youth; intoxicated the imaginations, and seized the passions, of his Eastern followers.

4. But Mahomet's highest heaven was reserved for those who fought his battles, or expended their fortunes in his cause.—"Those believers who sit still at home not having any hurt, and those who employ their fortunes and their persons for the religion of God, shall not be held equal. God hath preferred those who employ their fortunes and their persons in that cause, to a degree above those who sit at home. God had indeed promised every one Paradise: but God had preferred those who *fight for the faith* before those who sit still, by adding unto them a great reward; by degrees of honour conferred upon them from him, and by granting them forgiveness and mercy."§ Again; "Do ye reckon the giving drink to the pilgrims, and the visiting of the holy temple, to be actions as meritorious as those performed by him who believeth in God and the last day, and *fighteth for the religion of God!* They shall not be held equal with God.—They who have believed and fled their country, and employed their substance and their persons in the defence of God's true religion, shall be in the highest degree of honour with God; and these are they who shall be happy. The Lord sendeth them good tidings of mercy from him, and good will, and of gardens wherein they shall enjoy lasting pleasures. They shall continue therein for ever; for with God is a great reward."‖ And, once more; "Verily God hath purchased of the true believers their souls and their substance, promising them the enjoyment of Paradise, on condition that they *fight for the cause of*

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* Sale's Koran, c. ii. p. 17. † Ib. c. xlii. p. 393.
‡ Ib. c. xxii. p. 281. § Sale's Koran, c. iv. p. 73.
‖ Ib. c. ix. p. 151.

God: whether they slay or be slain, the promise for the same is assuredly due by the Law and the Gospel and the Koran."*†

5. His doctrine of predestination was applicable, and was applied by him, to the same purpose of fortifying and of exalting the courage of his adherents.—"If any thing of the matter had happened unto us, we had not been slain here. Answer: If ye had been in your houses, verily they would have gone forth to fight, whose slaughter was decreed, to the places where they died."‡

6. In warm regions, the appetite of the sexes is ardent, the passion for inebriating liquors moderate. In compliance with this distinction, although Mahomet laid a restraint upon the drinking of wine, in the use of women he allowed an almost unbounded indulgence. Four wives, with the liberty of changing them at pleasure,§ together with the persons of all his captives,‖ was an irresistible bribe to an Arabian warrior. "God is minded (says he, speaking of this very subject) to make his religion light unto you; for man was created weak." How different this from the unaccommodating purity of the Gospel! How would Mahomet have succeeded with the Christian lesson in his mouth,—"Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart?" It must be added, that Mahomet did not venture upon the prohibition of wine, till the fourth year of the Hegira, or seventeenth of his mission,¶ when his military successes had completely established his authority. The same observation holds of the fast of the Ramadan,** and of the most laborious part of his institution, the pilgrimage to Mecca.††

What has hitherto been collected from the records of the Mussulman history, relates to the twelve or thirteen years of Mahomet's peaceable preaching; which part alone of his life and enterprise admits of the smallest comparison with the origin of Christianity. A new scene is now unfolded. The city of Medina, distant about ten days' journey from Mecca, was at that time distracted by the hereditary contentions of two hostile tribes. These feuds were exasperated by the mutual persecutions of the Jews and Christians, and of the different Christian sects by which the city was inhabited.‡‡ The religion of Mahomet presented, in some measure, a point of union or compromise to these divided opinions. It embraced the principles which were common to them all. Each party saw in it an honourable acknowledgement of the fundamental truth of their own system. To the Pagan Arab, somewhat imbued with the sentiments and know-

* Ib. c. ix. p. 164.

† "The sword (saith Mahomet) is the key of heaven and of hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months' fasting or prayer. Whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven at the day of judgment; his wounds shall be resplendent as vermillion, and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim." Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 256.

‡ Sale's Koran, c. iii. p. 54. § Sale's Koran, c. iv. p. 68.

‖ Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 225. ¶ Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 126.

** Ib. p. 112.

†† This latter, however, already prevailed amongst the Arabs, and had grown out of their excessive veneration for the Caaba. Mahomet's law, in this respect, was rather a compliance than an innovation.—Sale's Prelim. Disc. p. 122.

‡‡ Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 100.

ledge of his Jewish or Christian fellow-citizen, it offered no offensive, or very improbable theology. This recommendation procured to Mahometanism a more favourable reception at Medina, than its author had been able by twelve years' painful endeavours, to obtain for it at Mecca. Yet, after all, the progress of the religion was inconsiderable. His missionary could only collect a congregation of forty persons.* It was not a religious, but a political association, which ultimately introduced Mahomet into Medina. Harassed, as it should seem, and disgusted by the long continuance of factions and disputes, the inhabitants of that city saw in the admission of the prophet's authority a rest from the miseries which they had suffered, and a suppression of the violence and fury which they had learned to condemn. After an embassy, therefore, composed of believers and unbelievers,† and of persons of both tribes, with whom a treaty was concluded of strict alliance and support, Mahomet made his public entry, and was received as the sovereign of Medina.

From this time, or soon after this time, the impostor changed his language and his conduct. Having now a town at his command, where to arm his party, and to head them with security, he enters upon new counsels. He now pretends that a divine commission is given him to attack the infidels, to destroy idolatry, and to set up the true faith by the sword.‡ An early victory over a very superior force, achieved by conduct and bravery, established the renown of his arms, and of his personal character.§ Every year after this was marked by battles or assassinations. The nature and activity of Mahomet's future exertions may be estimated from the computation, that, in the nine following years of his life, he commanded his army in person in eight general engagements,‖ and undertook, by himself or his lieutenants, fifty military enterprises.

From this time we have nothing left to account for, but that Mahomet should collect an army, that his army should conquer, and that his religion should proceed together with his conquests. The ordinary experience of human affairs, leaves us little to wonder at, in any of these effects: and they were likewise each assisted by peculiar facilities. From all sides, the roving Arabs crowded round the standard of religion and plunder, of freedom and victory, of arms and rapine. Beside the highly painted joys of a carnal paradise, Mahomet rewarded his followers in this world with a liberal division of the spoils, and with the persons of their female captives.¶ The condition of Arabia, occupied by small independent tribes, exposed it to the impression, and yielded to the progress, of a firm and resolute army. After the reduction of his native peninsula, the weakness also of the Roman provinces on the north and the west, as well as the distracted state of the Persian empire on the East, facilitated the successful invasion of neighbouring countries. That Mahomet's conquests should carry his religion along with them, will excite little sur-

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* Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 85. † Ibid.
§ Ib. p. 88. ‡ Vict. of Bedr, ib. p. 106.
‖ Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 255.
¶ Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 255.

prise, when we know the conditions which he proposed to the vanquished. Death or conversion was the only choice offerred to idolaters. "Strike off their heads! strike off all the ends of their fingers!* kill the idolaters, wheresoever ye shall find them!"† To the Jews and Christians was left the somewhat milder alternative of subjection and tribute, if they persisted in their own religion, or of an equal participation in the rights and liberties, the honours and privileges, of the faithful, if they embraced the religion of their conquerors. "Ye Christian dogs, you know your option; the Koran, the tribute, or the sword."‡ The corrupted state of Christianity in the seventh century, and the contentions of its sects, unhappily so fell in with men's care of their safety, or their fortunes, as to induce many to forsake its profession. Add to all which, that Mahomet's victories not only operated by the natural effect of conquest, but that they were constantly represented, both to his friends and enemies, as divine declarations in his favour. Success was evidence. Prosperity carried with it, not only influence, but proof. "Ye have already (says he, after the battle of Bedr) had a miracle shewn you, in two armies which attacked each other; one army fought for God's true religion, but the other were infidels."§ Again; "*Ye* slew not those who were slain at Bedr, but God slew them.—If ye desire a decision of the matter between us, now hath a decision come unto you."‖

Many more passages might be collected out of the Koran to the same effect. But they are unnecessary. The success of Mahometanism during this, and indeed every future period of its history, bears so little resemblance to the early propagation of Christianity, that no inference whatever can justly be drawn from it to the prejudice of the Christian argument. For, what are we comparing? A Galilean peasant accompanied by a few fishermen, with a conqueror at the head of his army. We compare Jesus without force, without power, without support, without one external circumstance of attraction or influence, prevailing against the prejudices, the learning, the hierarchy of his country; against the ancient religious opinions, the pompous religious rites, the philosophy, the wisdom, the authority of the Roman empire, in the most polished and enlightened period of its existence; with Mahomet making his way amongst Arabs: collecting followers in the midst of conquests and triumphs, in the darkest ages and countries of the world, and when success in arms not only operated by that command of men's wills and persons which attends prosperous undertakings, but was considered as a sure testimony of divine approbation. That multitudes, persuaded by this argument, should join the train of a victorious chief; that still greater multitudes should, without any argument, bow down before irresistible power; is a conduct in which we cannot see much to surprise us; in which we can see nothing that resembles the causes by which the establishment of Christianity was effected.

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* Sale's Koran, c. viii. p. 140. † Ib. c. ix. p. 149.
‡ Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 337. § Sale's Koran, c. iii. p. 36.
‖ Ib. c. viii. p. 141.

The success, therefore, of Mahometanism, stands not in the way of this important conclusion: that the propagation of Christianity, in the manner and under the circumstances in which it was propagated, is a *unique* in the history of the species. A Jewish peasant overthrew the religion of the world.

I have, nevertheless, placed the prevalency of the religion amongst the auxiliary arguments of its truth; because, whether it had prevailed or not, or whether its prevalency can or cannot be accounted for, the direct argument remains still. It is still true that a great number of men upon the spot, personally connected with the history and with the author of the religion, were induced by what they heard, and saw, and knew, not only to change their former opinions, but to give up, their time, and sacrifice their ease, to traverse seas and kingdoms without rest and without weariness, to commit themselves to extreme dangers, to undertake incessant toils, to undergo grievous sufferings, and all this, solely in consequence, and in support, of their belief of facts, which, if true, establish the truth of the religion, which, if false, they must have known to be so.

PART III.

A BRIEF CONSIDERATION OF SOME POPULAR OBJECTIONS

CHAPTER 1.

The discrepancies between the several Gospels.

I KNOW not a more rash or unphilosophical conduct of the understanding, than to reject the substance of a story, by reason of some diversity in the circumstances with which it is related. The usual character of human testimony is substantial truth under circumstantial variety. This is what the daily experience of courts of justice teaches. When accounts of a transaction come from the mouths of different witnesses, it is seldom that it is not possible to pick out apparent or real inconsistencies between them. These inconsistencies are studiously displayed by an adverse pleader, but oftentimes with little impression upon the minds of the judges. On the contrary, a close and minute agreement induces the suspicion of confederacy and fraud. When written histories touch upon the same scenes of action, the comparison almost always affords ground for a like reflection. Numerous, and sometimes important, variations present themselves; not seldom also, absolute and final contradictions; yet neither one nor the other, are deemed sufficient to shake the credibility of the main fact. The embassy of the Jews to deprecate the execution of Claudian's order to place his statue in their temple, Philo places in harvest, Josephus in seed-time; both contemporary writers. No reader is led by this inconsistency to doubt, whether such an embassy was sent, or whether such an order was given. Our own history supplies examples of the same kind. In the account of the Marquis of Argyll's death, in the reign of Charles the Second, we have a very remarkable contradiction. Lord Clarendon relates that he was condemned to be hanged, which was performed the same day; on the contrary, Burnet, Woodrow, Heath, Echard, concur in stating that he was beheaded; and that he was condemned upon the Saturday, and executed upon the Monday.* Was any reader of English history ever sceptic enough to raise from hence a question, whether the Marquis of Argyll was executed or not? Yet this ought to be left in uncertainty, according to the principles upon which the Christian history has sometimes been attacked. Dr. Middleton contended, that the different hours of the day assigned to the crucifixion of Christ, by John and by the other evangelists, did not admit of the reconcilement

* See Biog. Britann.

which learned men had proposed; and then concludes the discussion with this hard remark: "We must be forced, with several of the critics, to leave the difficulty just as we found it, chargeable with all the consequences of manifest inconsistency."* But what are these consequences? By no means the discrediting of the history as to the principal fact, by a repugnancy (even supposing that repugnancy not to be resolvable into different modes of computation) in the time of the day in which it is said to have taken place.

A great deal of the discrepancy observable in the Gospels arises from *omission;* from a fact or a passage of Christ's life being noticed by one writer, which is unnoticed by another. Now, omission is at all times a very uncertain ground of objection. We perceive it, not only in the comparison of different writers, but even in the same writer, when compared with himself. There are a great many particulars, and some of them of importance, mentioned by Josephus in his Antiquities, which, as we should have supposed, ought to have been put down by him in their place in the Jewish wars.† Suetonius, Tacitus, Dio Cassius, have, all three, written of the reign of Tiberius. Each has mentioned many things omitted by the rest,‡ yet no objection is from thence taken to the respective credit of their histories. We have in our own times, if there were not something indecorous in the comparison, the life of an eminent person, written by three of his friends, in which there is very great variety in the incidents selected by them; some apparent, and perhaps some real contradictions; yet without any impeachment of the substantial truth of their accounts, of the authenticity of their books, of the competent information or general fidelity of the writers.

But these discrepancies will be still more numerous, when men do not write histories, but *memoirs;* which is perhaps the true name and proper description of our Gospels: that is, when they do not undertake, or ever meant, to deliver, in order of time, a regular and complete account of all the things of importance, which the person, who is the subject of their history, did or said; but only, out of many similar ones, to give such passages, or such actions and discourses, as offered themselves more immediately to their attention, came in the way of their inquiries, occurred to their recollection, or were suggested by their *particular design* at the time of writing.

This particular design may appear sometimes, but not always, nor often. Thus I think that the particular design which Saint Matthew had in view whilst he was writing the history of the resurrection, was to attest the faithful performance of Christ's promise to his disciples to go before them into Galilee; because he alone, except Mark, who seems to have taken it from him, has recorded this promise, and he alone has confined his narrative to that single appearance to the disciples which fulfilled it. It was the preconcerted, the great and most public manifestation of our Lord's person. It was the thing which dwelt upon Saint Matthew's mind, and he adapted his narrative to it. But, that there is nothing in Saint Matthew's language, which negatives other appearances, or which imports that this his appearance to

* Middleton's Reflections answered by Benson. Hist. Christ. vol. iii. p. 50.
† Lardner, part. i. vol. ii. p. 735, &c. ‡ Ibid. p. 743.

his disciples in Galilee, in pursuance of his promise, was his first or only appearance, is made pretty evident by Saint Mark's Gospel which uses the same terms concerning the appearance in Galilee as Saint Matthew uses, yet itself records two other appearances prior to this: "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him as he said unto you" (xvi. 7.) We might be apt to infer from these words, that this was the *first* time they were to see him: at least, we might infer it, with as much reason as we draw the inference from the same words in Matthew: yet the historian himself did not perceive that he was leading his readers to any such conclusion; for, in the twelfth and two following verses of this chapter, he informs us of two appearances, which, by comparing the order of events, are shown to have been prior to the appearance in Galilee. "He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country: and they went and told it unto the residue, neither believed they them: afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen."

Probably the same observation, concerning the *particular design* which guided the historian, may be of use in comparing many other passages of the Gospels.

CHAPTER II.

Erroneous opinions imputed to the apostles.

A SPECIES of candour which is shewn towards every other book, is sometimes refused to the Scriptures; and that is, the placing of a distinction between judgment and testimony. We do not usually question the credit of a writer, by reason of an opinion he may have delivered upon subjects unconnected with his evidence: and even upon subjects connected with his account, or mixed with it in the same discourse or writing, we naturally separate facts from opinions, testimony from observation, narrative from argument.

To apply this equitable consideration to the Christian records, much controversy and much objection has been raised concerning the quotations of the Old Testament found in the New; some of which quotations, it is said, are applied in a sense, and to events, apparently different from that which they bear, and from those to which they belong, in the original. It is probable to my apprehension, that many of those quotations were intended by the writers of the New Testament as nothing more than *accommodations*. They quoted passages of their Scripture, which suited, and fell in with, the occasion before them, without always undertaking to assert, that the occasion was in the view of the author of the words. Such accommodations of passages from old authors, from books especially which are in every one's hands, are common with writers of all countries; but in none, perhaps, were more to be expected than in the writings of the Jews, whose literature was almost entirely confined to their Scriptures

Those prophecies which are alleged with more solemnity, and which are accompanied with a precise declaration, that they originally respected the event then related, are, I think, truly alleged. But were it otherwise; is the judgment of the writers of the New Testament, in interpreting passages of the Old, or sometimes, perhaps, in receiving established interpretations, so connected either with their veracity, or with their means of information concerning what was passing in their own times, as that a critical mistake, even were it clearly made out, should overthrow their historical credit?—Does it diminish it? Has it any thing to do with it?

Another error imputed to the first Christians, was the expected approach of the day of judgment. I would introduce this objection by a remark upon what appears to me a somewhat similar example. Our Saviour, speaking to Peter of John, said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"* These words, we find, had been so misconstrued, as that a report from thence "went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die." Suppose that this had come down to us amongst the prevailing opinions of the early Christians, and that the particular circumstance, from which the mistake sprang, had been lost (which, humanly speaking, was most likely to have been the case), some, at this day, would have been ready to regard and quote the error, as an impeachment of the whole Christian system. Yet with how little justice such a conclusion would have been drawn, or rather such a presumption taken up, the information which we happen to possess enables us now to perceive. To those who think that the Scriptures lead us to believe, that the early Christians, and even the apostles, expected the approach of the day of judgment in their own times, the same reflection will occur, as that which we have made with respect to the more partial, perhaps, and temporary, but still no less ancient error, concerning the duration of Saint John's life. It was an error, it may be likewise said, which would effectually hinder those who entertained it from acting the part of impostors.

The difficulty which attends the subject of the present chapter, is contained in this question; If we once admit the fallibility of the apostolic judgment, where are we to stop, or in what can we rely upon it? To which question, as arguing with unbelievers, and as arguing for the substantial truth of the Christian history, and for that alone, it is competent to the advocate of Christianity to reply, Give me the apostles' testimony, and I do not stand in need of their judgment; give me the facts, and I have complete security for every conclusion I want.

But, although I think that it is competent to the Christian apologist to return this answer; I do not think that it is the only answer which the objection is capable of receiving. The two following cautions, founded, I apprehend in the most reasonable distinctions, will exclude all uncertainty upon this head which can be attended with danger.

First, to separate what was the object of the apostolic mission, and declared by them to be so, from what was extraneous to it, or only inci-

* John xxi. 22.

dentally connected with it. Of points clearly extraneous to the religion nothing need be said. Of points incidentally connected with it, something may be added. Demoniacal possession is one of these points: concerning the reality of which, as this place will not admit the examination, or even the production of the argument on either side of the question, it would be arrogance in me to deliver any judgment. And it is unnecessary. For what I am concerned to observe is, that even they who think it was a general, bnt erroneous opinion of those times; and that the writers of the New Testament, in common with other Jewish writers of that age, fell into the manner of speaking and of thinking upon the subject, which then universally prevailed, need not be alarmed by the concession, as though they had any thing to fear from it, for the truth of Christianity. The doctrine was not what Christ brought into the world. It appears in the Christian records, incidentally and accidentally, as being the subsisting opinion of the age and country in which his ministry was exercised. It was no part of the object of *his* revelation, to regulate men's opinions concerning the action of spiritual substances upon animal bodies. At any rate it is unconnected with testimony. If a dumb person was by a word restored to the use of his speech, it signifies little to what cause the dumbness was ascribed; and the like of every other cure wrought upon those who are said to have been possessed. The malady was real, the cure was real, whether the popular explication of the cause was well founded, or not. The matter of fact, the change, so far as it was an object of sense, or of testimony, was in either case the same.

Secondly, that, in reading the apostolic writings, we distinguish between their doctrines and their arguments. Their doctrines came to them by revelation properly so called; yet in propounding these doctrines in their writings or discourses, they were wont to illustrate, support, and enforce them, by such analogies, arguments, and considerations, as their own thoughts suggested. Thus the call of the Gentiles, that is, the admission of the Gentiles to the Christian profession without a previous subjection to the law of Moses, was imparted to the apostles by revelation, and was attested by the miracles which attended the Christian ministry among them. The apostles' own assurance of the matter rested upon this foundation. Nevertheless, Saint Paul, when treating of the subject, offers a great variety of topics in its proof and vindication. The doctrine itself must be received: but it is not necessary, in order to defend Christianity, to defend the propriety of every comparison, or the validity of every argument, which the apostle has brought into the discussion. The same observation applies to some other instances; and is, in my opinion, very well founded; "When divine writers argue upon any point, we are always bound to believe the conclusions that their reasonings end in, as parts of divine revelation; but we are not bound to be able to make out, or even to assent to, all the premises made use of by them, in their whole extent, unless it appear plainly, that they affirm the premises as expressly as they do the conclusions proved by them."*

* Burnet's Expos. art. 6.

CHAPTER III.

The connexion of Christianity with the Jewish history.

UNDOUBTEDLY our Saviour assumes the divine origin of the Mosaic institution: and independently of his authority, I conceive it to be very difficult to assign any other cause for the commencement or existence of that institution; especially for the singular circumstance of the Jews' adhering to the unity, when every other people slid into polytheism; for their being men in religion, children in every thing else; behind other nations in the arts of peace and war, superior to the most improved in their sentiments and doctrines relating to the Deity.* Undoubtedly, also, our Saviour recognises the prophetic character of many of their ancient writers. So far, therefore, we are bound as Christians to go. But to make Christianity answerable with its life, for the circumstanstial truth of each separate passage of the Old Testament, the genuineness of every book, the information, fidelity, and judgment, of every writer in it, is to bring, I will not say great, but unnecessary difficulties, into the whole system. These books were universally read and received by the Jews of our Saviour's time. He and his apostles, in common with all other Jews, referred to them, alluded to them, used them. Yet except where he expressly ascribes a divine authority to particular predictions, I do not know that we can strictly draw any conclusion from the books being so used and applied, beside the proof, which it unquestionably is, of their notoriety and reception at that time. In this view, our Scriptures afford a valuable testimony to those of the Jews. But the nature of this testimony ought to be understood. It is surely very different from, what it is sometimes represented to be, a specific ratification of each particular fact and opinion; and not only of each particular fact, but of the motives assigned for every action, together with the judgment of praise or dispraise bestowed upon them. Saint James, in his epistle,† says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." Notwithstanding this text, the reality of Job's history, and even the existence of such a person, has been always deemed a fair subject of inquiry and discussion amongst Christian divines. Saint James's authority is considered as good evi-

* "In the doctrine, for example, of the unity, the eternity, the omnipotence, the omniscience, the omnipresence, the wisdom, and the goodness, of God; in their opinions concerning Providence, and the creation, preservation, and government, of the world." Campbell on Mir. p. 207. To which we may add, in the acts of their religion not being accompanied either with cruelties or impurities: in the religion itself being free from a species of superstition which prevailed universally in the popular religions of the ancient world, and which is to be found perhaps in all religions that have their origin in human artifice and credulity, *viz.* fanciful connexions between certain appearances and actions, and the destiny of nations or individuals. Upon these conceits rested the whole train of auguries and auspices, which formed so much even of the serious part of the religions of Greece and Rome, and of the charms and incantations which were practised in those countries by the common people. From every thing of this sort the religion of the Jews, and of the Jews alone, was free. Vide Priestley's Lectures on the truth of the Jewish and Christian Revelation, 1794.

† Chap. v. 11.

dence of the existence of the book of Job at that time, and of its reception by the Jews; and of nothing more. Saint Paul in his second Epistle to Timothy,* has this similitude; "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth." These names are not found in the Old Testament. And it is uncertain, whether Saint Paul took them from some apocryphal writing then extant, or from tradition. But no one ever imagined, that Saint Paul is here asserting the authority of the writing, if it was a written account which he quoted, or making himself answerable for the authenticity of the tradition; much less, that he so involves himself with either of these questions as that the credit of his own history and mission should depend upon the fact, whether Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, or not. For what reason a more rigorous interpretation should be put upon other references, it is difficult to know. I do not mean, that other passages of the Jewish history stand upon no better evidence than the history of Job, or of Jannes and Jambres (I think much otherwise); but I mean, that a reference in the New Testament, to a passage in the Old, does not so fix its authority, as to exclude all inquiry into its credibility; or into the separate reasons upon which that credibility is founded; and that it is an unwarrantable, as well as unsafe rule to lay down concerning the Jewish history, what was never laid down concerning any other, that either every particular of it must be true, or the whole false.

I have thought it necessary to state this point explicitly, because a fashion, revived by Voltaire, and pursued by the disciples of his school seems to have much prevailed of late, of attacking Christianity through the sides of Judaism. Some objections of this class are founded in misconstruction, some in exaggeration; but all proceed upon a supposition, which has not been made out by argument, *viz.* that the attestation, which the Author and first teachers of Christianity gave to the divine mission of Moses and the prophets, extends to every point and portion of the Jewish history; and so extends as to make Christianity responsible in its own credibility, for the circumstantial truth (I had almost said for the critical exactness) of every narrative contained in the Old Testament.

CHAPTER IV.

Rejection of Christianity.

WE acknowledge that the Christian religion although it converted great numbers, did not produce a universal, or even a general, conviction in the minds of men, of the age and countries in which it appeared. And this want of a more complete and extensive success, is called the *rejection* of the Christian history and miracles; and has been thought by some to form a strong objection to the reality of the facts which the history contains.

* Chap. iii. 8.

The matter of the objection divides itself into two parts; as it relates to the Jews, and as it relates to Heathen nations: because the minds of these two descriptions of men may have been, with respect to Christianity, under the influence of very different causes. The case of the Jews, inasmuch as our Saviour's ministry was originally addressed to them, offers itself first to our consideration.

Now, upon the subject of the truth of the Christian religion; with *us*, there is but one question, *viz.* whether the miracles were actually wrought? From acknowledging the miracles, we pass instantaneously to the acknowledgement of the whole. No doubt lies between the premises and the conclusion. If we believe the works, or any one of them, we believe in Jesus. And this order of reasoning is become so universal and familiar, that we do not readily apprehend how it could ever have been otherwise. Yet it appears to me perfectly certain, that the state of thought, in the mind of a Jew of our Saviour's age, was totally different from this. After allowing the reality of the miracle, he had a great deal to do to persuade himself that Jesus was the Messiah. This is clearly intimated by various passages of the Gospel history. It appears, that, in the apprehension of the writers of the New Testament, the miracles did not irresistibly carry, even those who saw them, to the conclusion intended to be drawn from them; or so compel assent, as to leave no room for suspense, for the exercise of candour, or the effects of prejudice. And to this point, at least, the evangelists may be allowed to be good witnesses; because it is a point, in which exaggeration or disguise would have been the other way. Their accounts, if they could be suspected of falsehood, would rather have magnified, than diminished, the effects of the miracles.

John vii. 21—31. "Jesus answered, and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.—If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Then said some of them of Jerusalem, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing to him: do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? *Howbeit we know this man, whence he is, but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.*" Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. *And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than those which this man hath done?*"

This passage is very observable. It exhibits the reasoning of different sorts of persons upon the occasion of a miracle, which persons of all sorts are represented to have acknowledged as real. One sort of men thought, that there was something very extraordinary in all this; but that still Jesus could not be the Christ, because there was a circumstance in his appearance which militated with an opinion concerning Christ, in which they had been brought up, and of the truth

of which, it is probable, they had never entertained a particle of doubt, *viz.* that "When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."

Another sort were inclined to believe him to be the Messiah. But even these did not argue as we should; did not consider the miracle as of itself decisive of the question; as what, if once allowed, excluded all farther debate upon the subject; but founded their opinion upon a kind of comparative reasoning, "When Christ cometh, will he do *more* miracles than those which this man hath done?"

Another passage in the same evangelist, and observable for the same purpose, is that in which he relates the resurrection of Lazarus: "Jesus," he tells us, (xi. 43, 44), "when he had thus spoken, cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth; and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." One might have suspected, that at least all those who stood by the sepulchre, when Lazarus was raised, would have believed in Jesus. Yet the evangelist does not so represent it.—"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him; but *some of them* went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done." We cannot suppose that the evangelist meant by this account, to leave his readers to imagine, that any of the spectators doubted about the truth of the miracle. Far from it. Unquestionably, he states the miracle to have been fully allowed; yet the persons who allowed it, were, according to his representation, capable of retaining hostile sentiments towards Jesus. "Believing in Jesus" was not only to believe that he wrought miracles, but that he was the Messiah. With us there is no difference between these two things: with them, there was the greatest; and the difference is apparent in this transaction. If Saint John has represented the conduct of the Jews upon this occasion truly (and why he should not I cannot tell, for it rather makes against him than for him), it shews clearly the principles upon which their judgment proceeded. Whether he has related the matter truly or not, the relation itself discovers the writer's own opinion of those principles: and that alone possesses considerable authority. In the next chapter, we have a reflection of the evangelist, entirely suited to this state of the case: "but though he had done so many miracles before them, yet believed they not on him."* The evangelist does not mean to impute the defect of their belief to any doubt about the miracles; but to their not perceiving, what all now sufficiently perceive, and what they would have perceived, had not their understandings been governed by strong prejudices, the infallible attestation which the works of Jesus bore to the truth of his pretensions.

The ninth chapter of Saint John's Gospel contains a very circumstantial account of the cure of a blind man: a miracle submitted to all the scrutiny and examination which a sceptic could propose. If a modern unbeliever had drawn up the interrogatories, they could hardly have been more critical or searching. The account contains also a very curious conference between the Jewish rulers and the patient, in which the point for our present notice is their resistance of

* Chap. xii. 37.

the force of the miracle, and of the conclusion to which it led, after they had failed in discrediting its evidence. "We know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is." That was the answer which set their minds at rest. And by the help of much prejudice, and great unwillingness to yield, it might do so. In the mind of the poor man restored to sight, which was under no such bias and felt no such reluctance, the miracle had its natural operation. "Herein," says he, "is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know, that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." We do not find, that the Jewish rulers had any other reply to make to this defence, than that which authority is sometimes apt to make to argument, "Dost thou teach us?"

If it shall be inquired, how a turn of thought, so different from what prevails at present, should obtain currency with the ancient Jews; the answer is found in two opinions which are proved to have subsisted in that age and country. The one was, their expectation of a Messiah of a kind totally contrary to what the appearance of Jesus bespoke him to be; the other, their persuasion of the agency of demons in the production of supernatural effects. These opinions are not *supposed* by us for the purpose of argument, but are evidently recognised in the Jewish writings, as well as in ours. And it ought moreover to be considered, that in these opinions the Jews of that age had been from their infancy brought up; that they were opinions, the grounds of which they had probably few of them inquired into, and of the truth of which they entertained no doubt. And I think that these two opinions conjointly afford an explanation of their conduct. The first put them upon seeking out some excuse to themselves for not receiving Jesus in the character in which he claimed to be received; and the second supplied them with just such an excuse as they wanted. Let Jesus work what miracles he would, still the answer was in readiness, "that he wrought them by the assistance of Beelzebub." And to this answer no reply could be made, but that which our Saviour did make, by shewing that the tendency of his mission was so adverse to the views with which this being was, by the objectors themselves, supposed to act, that it could not reasonably be supposed that he would assist in carrying it on. The power displayed in the miracles did not alone refute the Jewish solution, because the interposition of invisible agents being once admitted, it is impossible to ascertain the limits by which their efficiency is circumscribed. We of this day may be disposed, possibly, to think such opinions too absurd to have been ever seriously entertained. I am not bound to contend for the credibility of the opinions. They were at least as reasonable as the belief in witchcraft. They were opinions in which the Jews of that age had from their infancy been instructed; and those who cannot see enough in the force of this reason, to account for their conduct towards our Saviour, do not sufficiently consider how such opinions may sometimes become very general in a country, and with what pertinacity, when once become so they are, for that reason

alone, adhered to. In the suspense which these notions, and the prejudices resulting from them, might occasion, the candid and docile and humble-minded would probably decide in Christ's favour; the proud and obstinate, together with the giddy and the thoughtless, almost universally against him.

This state of opinion discovers to us also the reason of what some choose to wonder at, why the Jews should reject miracles when they saw them, yet rely so much upon the tradition of them in their own history. It does not appear, that it had ever entered into the minds of those who lived in the time of Moses and the prophets, to ascribe *their* miracles to the supernatural agency of evil beings. The solution was not then invented. The authority of Moses and the prophets being established, and become the foundation of the national polity and religion, it was not probable that the later Jews, brought up in a reverence for that religion, and the subjects of that polity, should apply to their history a reasoning which tended to overthrow the foundation of both.

II. The infidelity of the Gentile world, and that more especially of men of rank and learning in it, is resolvable into a principle which, in my judgment, will account for the inefficacy of any argument, or any evidence whatever, *viz.* contempt prior to examination. The state of religion amongst the Greeks and Romans, had a natural tendency to induce this disposition. Dionysius Halicarnassensis remarks, that there were six hundred different kinds of religion or sacred rites exercised at Rome.* The superior classes of the community treated them all as fables. Can we wonder then, that Christianity was included in the number, without inquiry into its separate merits, or the particular grounds of its pretensions? It might be either true or false for any thing they knew about it. The religion had nothing in its character which immediately engaged their notice. It mixed with no politics. It produced no fine writers. It contained no curious speculations. When it did reach their knowledge, I doubt not but that it appeared to them a very strange system,—so unphilosophical,—dealing so little in argument and discussion, in such arguments however and discussions as they were accustomed to entertain. What is said of Jesus Christ, of his nature, office, and ministry, would be, in the highest degree, alien from the conceptions of their theology. The Redeemer and the destined Judge of the human race, a poor young man, executed at Jerusalem with two thieves upon a cross! Still more would the language in which the Christian doctrine was delivered, be dissonant and barbarous to their ears. What knew they of grace, of redemption, of justification, of the blood of Christ shed for the sins of men, of reconcilement, of mediation? Christianity was made up of points they had never thought of; of terms which they had never heard.

It was presented also to the imagination of the learned Heathen under additional disadvantage, by reason of its real, and still more of its nominal, connexion with Judaism. It shared in the obloquy and ridicule with which that people and their religion were treated by the Greeks and Romans. They regarded Jehovah himself only as the

* Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 371.

idol of the Jewish nation, and what was related of him, as of a piece with what was told of the tutelar deities of other countries: nay, the Jews were in a particular manner ridiculed for being a credulous race; so that whatever reports of a miraculous nature came out of that country, were looked upon by the Heathen world as false and frivolous. When they heard of Christianity, they heard of it as a quarrel amongst this people, about some articles of their own superstition. Despising, therefore, as they did, the whole system, it was not probable that they would enter, with any degree of seriousness or attention, into the detail of its disputes, or the merits of either side. How little they knew, and with what carelessness they judged, of these matters, appears, I think, pretty plainly from an example of no less weight than that of Tacitus, who, in a grave and professed discourse upon the history of the Jews, states, that they worshipped the effigy of an ass.* The passage is a proof, how prone the learned men of those times were, and upon how little evidence, to heap together stories which might increase the contempt and odium in which that people was holden. The same foolish charge is also confidently repeated by Plutarch.†

It is observable, that all these considerations are of a nature to operate with the greatest force upon the highest ranks; upon men of education, and that order of the public from which *writers* are principally taken: I may add also, upon the philosophical as well as the libertine character; upon the Antonines or Julian, not less than upon Nero or Domitian: and more particularly, upon that large and polished class of men, who acquiesced in the general persuasion, that all they had to do was to practice the duties of morality, and to worship the deity *more patrio;* a habit of thinking, liberal as it may appear, which shuts the door against every argument for a new religion. The considerations above mentioned, would acquire also strength from the prejudice which men of rank and learning universally entertain against any thing that *originates* with the vulgar and illiterate; which prejudice is known to be as obstinate as any prejudice whatever.

Yet Christianity was still making its way: and amidst so many impediments to its progress, so much difficulty in procuring audience and attention, its actual success is more to be wondered at, than that it should not have universally conquered scorn and indifference, fixed the levity of a voluptuous age, or, through a cloud of adverse prejudications, opened for itself a passage to the hearts and understandings of the scholars of the age.

And the cause which is here assigned for the rejection of Christianity by men of rank and learning among the Heathens, namely, a strong antecedent contempt, accounts also for their *silence* concerning it. If they had rejected it upon examination, they would have written about it; they would have given their reasons. Whereas what men repudiate upon the strength of some prefixed persuasion, or from a settled contempt of the subject, of the persons who propose it, or of the manner in which it is proposed, they do not naturally write books about, or notice much in what they write upon other subjects.

* Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 2. † Sympos. lib. iv. quæst. ..

The letters of the Younger Pliny furnish an example of the silence, and let us, in some measure, into the cause of it. From his celebrated correspondence with Trajan, we know that the Christian religion prevailed in a very considerable degree in the province over which he presided; that it had excited his attention; that he had inquired into the matter, just so much as a Roman magistrate might be expected to inquire, *viz.* whether the religion contained any opinions dangerous to government; but that of its doctrines, its evidences, or its books, he had not taken the trouble to inform himself with any degree of care or correctness. But although Pliny had viewed Christianity in a nearer position than most of his learned countrymen saw it in; yet he had regarded the whole with such negligence and disdain (farther than as it seemed to concern his administration), that, in more than two hundred and forty letters of his which have come down to us, the subject is never once again mentioned. If, out of this number, the two letters between him and Trajan had been lost; with what confidence would the obscurity of the Christian religion have been argued from Pliny's silence about it, and with how little truth!

The name and character which Tacitus has given to Christianity, "exitiabilis superstitio," (a pernicious superstition), and by which two words he disposes of the whole question of the merits or demerits of the religion, afford a strong proof how little he knew, or concerned himself to know, about the matter. I apprehend that I shall not be contradicted, when I take upon me to assert, that no unbeliever of the present age would apply this epithet to the Christianity of the New Testament, or not allow that it was entirely unmerited. Read the instructions given, by a great teacher of the religion, to those very Roman converts of whom Tacitus speaks; and given also a very few years before the time of which he is speaking; and which are not, let it be observed, a collection of fine sayings brought together from different parts of a large work, but stand in one entire passage of a public letter, without the intermixture of a single thought which is frivolous or exceptionable:—"Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another: not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord: rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer: distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord: therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God:

and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all, their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour.

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."*

Read this, and then think of "exitiabilis superstitio!!"—Or if we be not allowed, in contending with Heathen authorities, to produce our books against theirs, we may at least be permitted to confront theirs with one another. Of this "pernicious superstition," what could *Pliny* find to blame, when he was led, by his office, to institute something like an examination into the conduct and principles of the sect? He discovered nothing, but that they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves a hymn to Christ as a God, and to bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but, not to be guilty of theft, robbery, or adultery: never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it.

Upon the words of Tacitus we may build the following observations:—

First; That we are well warranted in calling the view under which the learned men of that age beheld Christianity, an obscure and distant view. Had Tacitus known more of Christianity, of its precepts, duties, constitution, or design, however he had discredited the story, he would have respected the principle. He would have described the religion differently, though he had rejected it. It has been very satisfactorily shewn, that the "superstition" of the Christians consisted in worshipping a person unknown to the Roman calendar; and that the "perniciousness" with which they were reproached, was nothing else but their opposition to the established polytheism; and this view of the matter was just such a one as might be expected to occur to a

* Romans xii. 9.—xiii. 13.

mind, which held the sect in too much contempt to concern itself about the grounds and reasons of their conduct.

Secondly; We may from hence remark, how little reliance can be placed upon the most acute judgments, in subjects which they are pleased to despise; and which, of course, they from the first consider as unworthy to be inquired into. Had not Christianity survived to tell its own story, it must have gone down to posterity as a "pernicious superstition;" and that upon the credit of Tacitus's account, much I doubt not, strengthened by the name of the writer, and the reputation of his sagacity.

Thirdly; That this contempt prior to examination, is an intellectual vice, from which the greatest faculties of mind, are not free. I know not, indeed, whether men of the greatest faculties of mind, are not the most subject to it. Such men feel themselves seated upon an eminence. Looking down from their height upon the follies of mankind, they behold contending tenets wasting their idle strength upon one another, with the common disdain of the absurdity of them all. This habit of thought, however comfortable to the mind which entertains it, or however natural to great parts, is extremely dangerous; and more apt, than almost any other disposition, to produce hasty and contemptuous, and, by consequence, erroneous judgments, both of persons and opinions.

Fourthly; We need not be surprised at many writers of that age not mentioning Christianity at all; when they who did mention it, appear to have entirely misconceived its nature and character; and in consequence of this misconception, to have regarded it with negligence and contempt.

To the knowledge of the greatest part of the learned Heathens, the facts of the Christian history could only come by report. The books, probably, they had never looked into. The settled habit of their minds was, and long had been, an indiscriminate rejection of all reports of the kind. With these sweeping conclusions, truth hath no chance. It depends upon distinction. If they would not inquire, how should they be convinced? It might be founded in truth, though they, who made no search, might not discover it.

"Men of rank and fortune, of wit and abilities, are often found, even in Christian countries, to be surprisingly ignorant of religion, and of every thing that relates to it. Such were many of the Heathens. Their thoughts were all fixed upon other things; upon reputation and glory, upon wealth and power, upon luxury and pleasure, upon business or learning. They thought, and they had reason to think, that the religion of their country was fable and forgery, a heap of inconsistent lies; which inclined them to suppose that other religions were no better. Hence it came to pass, that when the apostles preached the Gospel, and wrought miracles in confirmation of a doctrine every way worthy of God, many Gentiles knew little or nothing of it, and would not take the least pains to inform themselves about it. This appears plainly from ancient history."*

I think it by no means unreasonable to suppose, that the heathen public, especially that part which is made up of men of rank and edu-

* Jortin's Disc. on the Christ. Rel. p. 66. ed. 4th.

cation, were divided into two classes; those who despised Christianity beforehand, and those who received it. In correspondency with which division of character, the writers of that age would also be of two classes; those who were silent about Christianity, and those who were Christians. "A good man, who attended sufficiently to the Christian affairs, would become a Christian; after which his testimony ceased to be Pagan, and became Christian."*

I must also add, that I think it sufficiently proved, that the notion of magic was resorted to by the Heathen adversaries of Christianity, in like manner as that of diabolical agency had before been by the Jews. Justin Martyr alleges this as his reason for arguing from prophecy, rather than from miracles. Origen imputes this evasion to Celsus; Jerome to Porphyry; and Lactantius to the Heathen in general. The several passages, which contain these testimonies, will be produced in the next chapter. It being difficult however to ascertain in what degree this notion prevailed, especially amongst the superior ranks of the Heathen communities, another, and I think, an adequate, cause has been assigned for their infidelity. It is probable, that in many cases the two causes would operate together.

CHAPTER V.

That the Christian miracles are not recited, or appealed to, by early Christian writers themselves, so fully or frequently as might have been expected.

I SHALL consider this objection, first, as it applies to the letters of the apostles, preserved in the New Testament; and secondly, as it applies to the remaining writings of other early Christians.

The epistles of the apostles are either hortatory or argumentative. So far as they were occupied in delivering lessons of duty, rules of public order, admonitions against certain prevailing corruptions, against vice, or any particular species of it, or in fortifying and encouraging the constancy of the disciples under the trials to which they were exposed, there appears to be no place or occasion for more of these references than we actually find.

So far as the epistles are argumentative, the nature of the argument which they handle accounts for the infrequency of these allusions. These epistles were not written to prove the truth of Christianity. The subject under consideration was not that which the miracles decided, the reality of our Lord's mission; but it was that which the miracles did not decide, the nature of his person or power, the design of his advent, its effects, and of those effects the value, kind, and extent. Still I maintain, that miraculous evidence lies at the bottom of the argument. For nothing could be so preposterous as for the disciples of Jesus to dispute amongst themselves, or with others, concerning his office or character, unless they believed, that

* Hartley, Obs. p. 119.

he had shewn, by supernatural proofs, that there was something extraordinary in both. Miraculous evidence, therefore, forming not the texture of these arguments, but the ground and substratum, if it be occasionally discerned, if it be incidentally appealed to, it is exactly so much as ought to take place supposing the history to be true.

As a farther answer to the objection, that the apostolic epistles do not contain so frequent, or such direct and circumstantial recitals of miracles as might be expected, I would add, *that the apostolic epistles resemble in this respect the apostolic speeches;* which speeches are given by a writer who distinctly records numerous miracles wrought by these apostles themselves, and by the Founder of the institution in their presence: that it is unwarrantable to contend, that the omission, or infrequency, of such recitals in the speeches of the apostles, negatives the existence of the miracles, when the speeches are given in immediate conjunction with the history of those miracles: and that a conclusion which cannot be inferred from the speeches, without contradicting the whole tenor of the book which contains them, cannot be inferred from letters which, in this respect, are similar only to the speeches.

To prove the similitude which we allege, it may be remarked, that although in Saint Luke's Gospel the apostle Peter is represented to have been present at many decisive miracles wrought by Christ; and although the second part of the same history ascribes other decisive miracles to Peter himself, particularly the cure of the lame man at the gate of the temple, (Acts iii. 1.) the death of Ananias and Sapphira, (Acts v. 1.) the cure of Æneas, (Acts ix. 34.) the resurrection of Dorcas, (Acts ix. 40.) yet out of six speeches of Peter, preserved in the Acts, I know but two in which reference is made to the miracles wrought by Christ, and only one in which he refers to miraculous powers possessed by himself. In his speech upon the day of Pentecost, Peter addresses his audience with great solemnity, thus: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know,"* &c. In his speech upon the conversion of Cornelius, he delivers his testimony to the miracles performed by Christ, in these words: "We are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem."† But in this latter speech, no allusion appears to the miracles wrought by himself, notwithstanding that the miracles above enumerated all preceded the time in which it was delivered. In his speech upon the election of Matthias,‡ no distinct reference is made to any of the miracles of Christ's history, except his resurrection. The same also may be observed of his speech upon the cure of the lame man at the gate of the temple:§ the same in his speech before the Sanhedrin;‖ the same in his second apology in the presence of that assembly. Stephen's long speech contains no reference whatever to miracles, though it be expressly related of him, in the book which preserves the speech, and almost immediately before the speech,

* Acts ii. 22. † Ibid. x. 39
‡ i. 15. § iii. 12. ‖ iv. 8.

"that he did great wonders and miracles among the people." Again, although miracles be expressly attributed to Saint Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, first generally, as at Iconium, (Acts xiv. 3,) during the whole tour through the Upper Asia, (xiv. 27. xv. 12.) at Ephesus; (xix. 11, 12.) secondly, in specific instances, as the blindness of Elymas at Paphos,† the cure of the cripple at Lystra,‡ of the Pythoness at Phillippi,§ the miraculous liberation from prison in the same city,‖ the restoration of Eutychus,¶ the predictions of his shipwreck,** the viper at Melita,†† the cure of Publius's father;‡‡ at all which miracles, except the first two, the historian himself was present, notwithstanding, I say, this positive ascription of miracles to Saint Paul, yet in the speeches delivered by him, and given as delivered by him, in the same book in which the miracles are related, and the miraculous powers asserted, the appeals to his own miracles, or indeed to any miracles at all, are rare and incidental. In his speech at Antioch in Pisidia,§§ there is no allusion but to the resurrection. In his discourse at Miletus,‖‖ none to any miracle; none in his speech before Felix;¶¶ none in his speech before Festus;*† except to Christ's resurrection, and his own conversion.

Agreeably hereunto, in thirteen letters ascribed to Saint Paul, we have incessant references to Christ's resurrection, frequent references to his own conversion, three indubitable references to the miracles which he wrought;*‡ four other references to the same, less direct yet highly probable;*§ but more copious or circumstantial recitals we have not. The consent, therefore, between Saint Paul's speeches and letters, is in this respect sufficiently exact; and the reason in both is the same; namely, that the miraculous history was all along *presupposed*, and that the question, which occupied the speaker's and the writer's thoughts, was this: whether, allowing the history of Jesus to be true, he was, upon the strength of it, to be received as the promised Messiah; and, if he was, what were the consequences, what was the object and benefit of his mission.

The general observation which has been made upon the apostolic writings, namely, that the subject of which they treated, did not lead them to any direct recital of the Christian history, belongs also to the writings of the apostolic fathers. The epistle of Barnabas is, in its subject and general composition, much like the Epistle to the Hebrews; an allegorical application of divers passages of the Jewish history, of their law and ritual, to those parts of the Christian dispensation in which the author perceived a resemblance. The epistle of Clement was written for the sole purpose of quieting certain dissensions that had arisen amongst the members of the church of Corinth, and of reviving in their minds that temper and spirit of which their predecessors in the Gospel had left them an example. The work of Hermas is a vision: quotes neither the Old Testament nor the New;

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* Acts vi. 8. † xiii. 11. ‡ xiv. 8.
§ xvi. 16. ‖ xvi. 26. ¶ xx. 10.
** xxvii. 1. †† xxviii. 6. ‡‡ xxviii. 8.
§§ xiii. 16. ‖‖ xx. 17. ¶¶ xxiv. 10. *† xxv. 8.
*‡ Gal. iii. 5. Rom. xv. 18, 19 2 Cor. xii. 12.
*§ 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. Eph. iii. 7. Gal. ii. 8. 1 Thess. i. 5.

and merely falls now and then into the language, and the mode of speech, which the author had read in our Gospels. The epistles of Polycarp and Ignatius had for their principal object the order and discipline of the churches which they addressed. Yet, under all these circumstances of disadvantage, the great points of the Christian history are fully recognised. This hath been shewn in its proper place.*

There is, however, another class of writers, to whom the answer above given, *viz.* the unsuitableness of any such appeals or references as the objection demands, to the subjects of which the writings treated, does not apply; and that is, the class of ancient *apologists*, whose declared design it was to defend Christianity, and to give the reasons of their adherence to it. It is necessary, therefore, to inquire how the matter of the objection stands in these.

The most ancient apologist, of whose works we have the smallest knowledge, is Quadratus. Quadratus lived about seventy years after the ascension, and presented his apology to the Emperor Adrian. From a passage of this work, preserved in Eusebius, it appears that the author did directly and formally appeal to the miracles of Christ, and in terms as express and confident as we could desire. The passage (which has been once already stated) is as follows;—The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous, for they were real; both they that were healed, and they that were raised from the dead, were seen, not only when they were healed, or raised, but for a long time afterward: not only whilst he dwelled on this earth, but also after his departure, and for a good while after it; insomuch as that some of them have reached to our times.† Nothing can be more rational or satisfactory than this.

Justin Martyr, the next of the Christian apologists whose work is not lost, and who followed Quadratus at the distance of about thirty years, has touched upon passages of Christ's history in so many places, that a tolerably complete account of Christ's life might be collected out of his works. In the following quotation, he asserts the performance of miracles by Christ in words as strong and positive as the language possesses; "Christ healed those who from their birth were blind, and deaf, and lame: causing by his word, one to leap, another to hear, and a third to see: and having raised the dead, and caused them to live, he, by his works, excited attention, and induced the men of that age to know him. Who, however, seeing these things done, said that it was a magical appearance, and dared to call him a magician, and a deceiver of the people."‡

In his first apology§, Justin expressly assigns the reason for his having recourse to the argument of prophecy, rather than alleging the miracles of the Christian history: which reason was, that the persons with whom he contended would ascribe these miracles to magic; "lest any of our opponents should say, What hinders, but that he who is called Christ by us, being a man sprung from men,

* See page 82, &c.
† Euseb. Hist. l. iv. c. 3.
‡ Just. Dial. p. 258, ed. Thirlby.
§ Apolog. prim. p. 48, ed. Thirlby.

performed the miracles which we attribute to him, by magical art?' The suggestion of this reason meets, as I apprehend, the very point of the present objection; more especially when we find Justin followed in it by other writers of that age. Irenæus who came about forty years after him, notices the same evasion in the adversaries of Christianity, and replies to it by the same argument: "But, if they shall say, that the Lord performed these things by an illusory appearance (φανταοωδως), leading these objectors to the prophecies, we will shew from them, that all things were thus predicted concerning him, and strictly came to pass."* Lactantius, who lived a century lower, delivers the same sentiment, upon the same occasion: "He performed miracles;—we might have supposed him to have been a magician, as ye say, and as the Jews then supposed, if all the prophets had not with one spirit foretold that Christ should perform these very things."†

But to return to the Christian apologists in their order. Tertullian:—"That person whom the Jews had vainly imagined, from the meanness of his appearance, to be a mere man, they afterward, in consequence of the power he exerted, considered as a magician, when he, with one word, ejected devils out of the bodies of men, gave sight to the blind, cleansed the leprous, strengthened the nerves of those that had the palsy, and lastly, with one command, restored the dead to life: when he, I say, made the very elements obey him, assuaged the storms, walked upon the seas, demonstrating himself to be the Word of God."‡

Next in the catalogue of professed apologists we may place Origen, who, it is well known, published a formal defence of Christianity, in answer to Celsus, a Heathen, who had written a discourse against it. I know no expressions, by which a plainer or more positive appeal to the Christian miracles can be made, than the expressions used by Origen; "Undoubtedly we do think him to be the Christ, and the Son of God, because he healed the lame and the blind; and we are the more confirmed in this persuasion, by what is written in the prophecies: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear, and the lame man shall leap as a hart." But that he also raised the dead; and that it is not a fiction of those who wrote the Gospels, is evident from hence, that, if it had been a fiction, there would have been many recorded to be raised up, and such as had been a long time in their graves. But, it not being a fiction, few have been recorded: for instance, the daughter of the ruler of a synagogue, of whom I do not know why he said, She is not dead but sleepeth, expressing something peculiar to her, not common to all dead persons: and the only son of a widow, on whom he had compassion, and raised him to life, after he had bid the bearers of the corpse to stop: and the third, Lazarus, who had been buried four days." This is positively to assert the miracles of Christ, and it is also to comment upon them, and that with a considerable degree of accuracy and candour.

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* Iren. l. ii. c. 57. † Lactant. v. 3.
‡ Tertull. Apolog. p. 29; ed. Priorii. Par. 1675.

In another passage of the same author, we meet with the old solution of magic applied to the miracles of Christ by the adversaries of the religion. "Celsus," saith Origen, "well knowing what great works may be alleged to have been done by Jesus, pretends to grant that the things related of him are true; such as healing diseases, raising the dead, feeding multitudes with a few loaves, of which large fragments were left."* And then Celsus gives, it seems, an answer to these proofs of our Lord's mission, which, as Origen understood it, resolved the phenomena into magic; for Origen begins his reply by observing, "You see that Celsus in a manner allows that there is such a thing as magic."†

It appears also from the testimony of Saint Jerome, that Porphyry, the most learned and able of the Heathen writers against Christianity, resorted to the same solution: "Unless," says he, speaking to Vigilantius, "according to the manner of the Gentiles and the profane, of *Porphyry* and Eunomius, you pretend that these are the tricks of demons."‡

This magic, these demons, this illusory appearance, this comparison with the tricks of Jugglers, by which many of that age accounted so easily for the Christian miracles, and which answers the advocates of Christianity often thought it necessary to refute by arguments drawn from other topics, and particularly from prophecy (to which, it seems, these solutions did not apply), we now perceive to be gross subterfuges. That such reasons were ever seriously urged, and seriously received, is only a proof, what a gloss and varnish fashion can give to any opinion.

It appears, therefore, that the miracles of Christ, understood as we understand them, in their literal and historical sense, were positively and precisely asserted and appealed to by the apologists for Christianity; which answers the allegation of the objection.

I am ready, however, to admit, that the ancient Christian advocates did not insist upon the miracles in argument, so frequently as I should have done. It was their lot to contend with notions of magical agency, against which the mere production of the facts was not sufficient for the convincing of their adversaries: I do not know whether they themselves thought it quite decisive of the controversy. But since it is proved, I conceive with certainty, that the sparingness with which they appealed to miracles, was owing neither to their ignorance, nor their doubt of the facts, it is, at any rate, an objection, not to the truth of the history, but to the judgment of its defenders.

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* Orig. cont. Cels. lii. sect. 48.

† Lardner's Jewish and Heath. Test. vol. ii. p. 294. ed. 4to.

‡ Jerome cont. Vigil.

CHAPTER VI.

Want of universality in the knowledge and reception of Christianity, and of greater clearness in the evidence.

OF a revelation which really came from God, the proof, it has been said would in all ages be so public and manifest, that no part of the human species would remain ignorant of it, no understanding could fail of being convinced by it.

The advocates of Christianity do not pretend that the evidence of their religion possesses these qualities. They do not deny that we can conceive it to be within the compass of divine power, to have communicated to the world a higher degree of assurance, and to have given to his communication a stronger and more extensive influence. For any thing we are able to discern, God *could* have so formed men, as to have perceived the truths of religion intuitively; or to have carried on a communication with the other world, whilst they lived in this; or to have seen the individuals of the species, instead of dying, pass to heaven by a sensible translation. He could have presented a separate miracle to each man's senses. He could have established a standing miracle. He could have caused miracles to be wrought in every different age and country. These, and many more methods, which we may imagine, if we once give loose to our imaginations, are, so far as we can judge, all practicable.

The question, therefore, is, not whether Christianity possesses the highest possible degree of evidence, but whether the not having more evidence be a sufficient reason for rejecting that which we have.

Now there appears to be no fairer method of judging, concerning any dispensation which is alleged to come from God, when a question is made whether such a dispensation could come from God or not, than by comparing it with other things which are acknowledged to proceed from the same counsel, and to be produced by the same agency. If the dispensation in question labour under no defects but what apparently belong to other dispensations, these seeming defects do not justify us in setting aside the proofs which are offered of its authenticity, if they be otherwise entitled to credit.

Throughout that order then of nature, of which God is the author, what we find is a system of *beneficence*: we are seldom or ever able to make out a system of *optimism*. I mean, that there are few cases in which, if we permit ourselves to range in possibilities, we cannot suppose something more perfect, and more unobjectionable, than what we see. The rain which descends from heaven, is confessedly amongst the contrivances of the Creator, for the sustentation of the animals and vegetables which subsist upon the surface of the earth. Yet how partially and irregularly is it supplied! How much of it falls upon the sea, where it can be of no use! how often is it wanted where it would be of the greatest! What tracts of continent are rendered desarts by the scarcity of it! Or, not to speak of extreme cases, how much, sometimes, do inhabited countries suffer by its deficiency or delay!—We could imagine, if to imagine were our

business, the matter to be otherwise regulated. We could imagine showers to fall, just where and when they would do good; always seasonable, every where sufficient; so distributed as not to leave a field upon the face of the globe scorched by drought, or even a plant withering for the lack of moisture. Yet, does the difference between the real case and the imagined case, or the seeming inferiority of the one to the other, authorize us to say, that the present disposition of the atmosphere is not amongst the productions or the designs of the Deity? Does it check the inference which we draw from the confessed beneficence of the provision? or does it make us cease to admire the contrivance? The observation, which we have exemplified in the single instance of the rain of heaven, may be repeated concerning most of the phenomena of nature; and the true conclusion to which it leads is this: that to inquire what the deity might have done, could have done, or, as we even sometimes presume to speak, ought to have done, or in hypothetical cases, would have done, and to build any propositions upon such inquiries against evidence of facts, is wholly unwarrantable. It is a mode of reasoning which will not do in natural history, which will not do in natural religion, which cannot therefore be applied with safety to revelation. It may have some foundation, in certain speculative *à priori* ideas of the divine attributes; but it has none in experience, or in analogy. The general character of the works of nature is, on the one hand, goodness both in design and effect; and, on the other hand, a liability to difficulty, and to objections, if such objections be allowed, by reason of seeming incompleteness or uncertainty in attaining their end. Christianity participates of this character. The true similitude between nature and revelation consists in this; that they each bear strong marks of their original; that they each also bear appearances of irregularity and defect. A system of strict optimism may nevertheless be the real system in both cases. But what I contend is, that the proof is hidden from *us*: that we ought not to expect to perceive *that* in revelation, which we hardly perceive in any thing; that beneficence, of which we *can* judge, ought to satisfy us, that optimism, of which we *cannot* judge, ought not to be sought after. We can judge of beneficence, because it depends upon effects which we experience, and upon the relation between the means which we see acting and the ends which we see produced. We cannot judge of optimism, because it necessarily implies a comparison of that which is tried, with that which is not tried; of consequences which we see, with others which we imagine, and concerning many of which, it is more than probable we know nothing; concerning some, that we have no notion.

If Christianity be compared with the state and progress of natural religion, the argument of the objector will gain nothing by the comparison. I remember hearing an unbeliever say, that, if God had given a revelation he would have written it in the skies. Are the truths of natural religion written in the skies, or in a language which every one reads? or is this the case with the most useful arts, or the most necessary sciences of human life? An Otaheitean or an Esquimaux knows nothing of Christianity; does he know more of the principles of deism or morality? which, notwithstanding his ignorance, are neither untrue, nor unimportant, nor uncertain. The existence of the

Deity is left to be collected from observations, which every man does not make, which every man, perhaps, is not capable of making. Can it be argued, that God does not exist, because, if he did, he would let us see him, or discover himself to mankind by proofs, (such as, we may think, the nature of the subject merited), which no inadvertency could miss, no prejudice withstand?

If Christianity be regarded as a providential instrument for the melioration of mankind, its progress and diffusion resemble that of other causes by which human life is improved. The diversity is not greater, nor the advance more slow, in religion, than we find it to be in learning, liberty, government, laws. The deity hath not touched the order of nature in vain. The Jewish religion produced great and permanent effects; the Christian religion hath done the same. It hath disposed the world to amendment. It hath put things in a train. It is by no means improbable, that it may become universal: and that the world may continue in that stage so long as that the duration of its reign may bear a vast proportion to the time of its partial influence.

When we argue concerning Christianity, that it must necessarily be true, because it is beneficial, we go, perhaps, too far on one side: and we certainly go too far on the other, when we conclude that it must be false, because it is not so efficacious as we could have supposed. The question of its truth is to be tried upon its proper evidence, without deferring much to this sort of argument, on either side. "The evidence," as Bishop Butler hath rightly observed, "depends upon the judgment we form of human conduct, under given circumstances, of which it may be presumed that we know something; the objection stands upon the supposed conduct of the Deity, under relations with which we are not acquainted."

What would be the real effect of that overpowering evidence which our adversaries require in a revelation, it is difficult to foretell; at least, we must speak of it as of a dispensation of which we have no experience. Some consequences however would, it is probable, attend this economy, which do not seem to benefit a revelation that proceeded from God. One is, that irresistible proof would restrain the voluntary powers too much; would not answer the purpose of trial and probation: would call for no exercise of candour, seriousness, humility, inquiry; no submission of passion, interests, and prejudices, to moral evidence and to probable truth; no habits of reflection; none of that previous desire to learn and to obey the will of God, which forms perhaps the test of the virtuous principle, and which induces men to attend, with care and reverence, to every credible intimation of that will, and to resign present advantages and present pleasures to every reasonable expectation of propitiating his favour. "Men's moral probation may be, whether they will take due care to inform themselves by impartial consideration; and, afterward, whether they will act as the case requires, upon the evidence which they have. And this we find by experience, is often our probation in our temporal capacity."*

* Butler's Analogy, part ii. c. vi.

II. These modes of communication would leave no place for the admission of *internal evidence*; which ought, perhaps, to bear a considerable part in the proof of every revelation, because it is a species of evidence, which applies itself to the knowledge, love, and practice of virtue, and which operates in proportion to the degree of those qualities which it finds in the person whom it addresses. Men of good dispositions, amongst Christians, are greatly affected by the impression which the Scriptures themselves make upon their minds. Their conviction is much strengthened by these impressions. And this perhaps was intended to be one effect to be produced by the religion. It is likewise true, to whatever cause we ascribe it (for I am not in this work at liberty to introduce the Christian doctrine of grace or assistance, or the Christian promise, that, "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God,"*) —it is true, I say, that they who sincerely act, or sincerely endeavour to act, *according* to what they believe, that is, according to the just result of the probabilities, or, if you please, the possibilities, of natural and revealed religion, which they themselves perceive, and according to a rational estimate of consequences, and, above all, according to the just effect of those principles of gratitude and devotion, which even the view of nature generates in a well-ordered mind, *seldom fail of proceeding farther*. This also may have been exactly what was designed.

Whereas, may it not be said that irresistible evidence would confound all characters and all dispositions? would subvert, rather than promote, the true purpose of the divine counsels; which is, not to produce *obedience* by a force little short of mechanical constraint (which obedience would be regularity, not virtue, and would hardly perhaps differ from that which inanimate bodies pay to the laws impressed upon their nature), but to treat moral agents agreeably to what they are; which is done, when light and motives are of such kinds, and are imparted in such measures, that the influence of them depends upon the recipients themselves? "It is not meet to govern rational free agents *in vid* by sight and sense. It would be no trial or thanks to the most sensual wretch to forbear sinning, if heaven and hell were open to his sight. That spiritual vision and fruition is our state *in patrid*." (Baxter's Reasons, p. 357.)—There may be truth in this thought, though roughly expressed. Few things are more improbable than that we (the human species) should be the highest order of beings in the universe: that animated nature should ascend from the lowest reptile to us, and all at once stop there. If there be classes above us of rational intelligences, clearer manifestations may belong to them. This may be one of the distinctions. And it may be one, to which we ourselves hereafter shall attain.

III. But may it not also be asked, whether the perfect display of a future state of existence would be compatible with the activity of civil life, and with the success of human affairs? I can easily conceive that this impression may be overdone; that it may so seize and fill the thoughts, as to leave no place for the cares and offices of men's several stations, no anxiety for worldly prosperity, or even for a

* John vii. 17.

worldly provision, and, by consequence, no sufficient stimulus to secular industry. Of the first Christians we read, "that all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need: and, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."* This was extremely natural, and just what might be expected from miraculous evidence coming with full force upon the senses of mankind: but I much doubt whether, if this state of mind had been universal, or long-continued, the business of the world could have gone on. The necessary arts of social life would have been little cultivated. The plough and the loom would have stood still. Agriculture, manufactures, trade, and navigation, would not, I think, have flourished, if they could have been exercised at all. Men would have addicted themselves to contemplative and ascetic lives, instead of lives of business and of useful industry. We observe that Saint Paul found it necessary, frequently to recall his converts to the ordinary labours and domestic duties of their condition; and to give them, in his own example, a lesson of contented application to their worldly employments.

By the manner in which the religion is now proposed, a great portion of the human species is enabled, and of these multitudes of every generation are induced, to seek and to effectuate their salvation through the medium of Christianity, without interruption of the prosperity or of the regular course of human affairs.

CHAPTER VII.

The supposed effects of Christianity.

THAT a religion, which, under every form in which it is taught, holds forth the final reward of virtue and punishment of vice, and proposes those distinctions of virtue and vice, which the wisest and most cultivated part of mankind confess to be just, should not be believed, is very possible; but that, so far as it is believed, it should not produce any good, but rather a bad effect, upon public happiness, is a proposition which it requires very strong evidence to render credible. Yet many have been found to contend for this paradox, and very confident appeals have been made to history, and to observation, for the truth of it.

In the conclusions, however, which these writers draw from what they call experience, two sources, I think, of mistake, may be perceived.

One is, that they look for the influence of religion in the wrong place.

The other, that they charge Christianity with many consequences, for which it is not responsible.

* Acts ii. 44—46.

I. The influence of religion is not to be sought for in the councils of princes, in the debates or resolutions of popular assemblies, in the conduct of governments towards their subjects, or of states and sovereigns towards one another; of conquerors at the head of their armies, or of parties intriguing for power at home (topics which alone almost occupy the attention, and fill the pages, of history); but must be perceived, if perceived at all, in the silent course of private and domestic life. Nay more; even *there* its influence may not be very obvious to observation. If it check, in some degree, personal dissoluteness, if it beget a general probity in the transaction of business, if it produce soft and humane manners in the mass of the community, and occasional exertions of laborious or expensive benevolence in a few individuals, it is all the effect which can offer itself to external notice. The kingdom of heaven is within us. That which is the substance of the religion, its hopes and consolations, its intermixture with the thoughts by day and by night, the devotion of the heart, the control of appetite, the steady direction of the will to the commands of God, is necessarily invisible. Yet upon these depend the virtue and the happiness of millions. This cause renders the representations of history, with respect to religion, defective and fallacious, in a greater degree than they are upon any other subject. Religion operates most upon those of whom history knows the least; upon fathers and mothers in their families, upon men-servants and maid-servants, upon the orderly tradesman, the quiet villager, the manufacturer at his loom, the husbandman in his fields. Amongst such, its influence collectively may be of inestimable value, yet its effects, in the mean time, little upon those who figure upon the stage of the world. *They* may know nothing of it; they may believe nothing of it; they may be actuated by motives more impetuous than those which religion is able to excite. It cannot, therefore, be thought strange, that this influence should elude the grasp and touch of public history: for, what is public history, but a register of the successes and disappointments, the vices, the follies, and the quarrels, of those who engage in contentions for power?

I will add, that much of this influence may be felt in times of public distress, and little of it in times of public wealth and security. This also increases the uncertainty of any opinions that we draw from historical representations. The influence of Christianity is commensurate with no effects which history states. We do not pretend that it has any such necessary and irresistible power over the affairs of nations, as to surmount the force of other causes.

The Christian religion also acts upon public usages and institutions by an operation which is only secondary and indirect. Christianity is not a code of civil law. It can only reach public institutions through private character. Now its influence upon private character may be considerable, yet many public usages and institutions repugnant to its principles may remain. To get rid of these, the reigning part of the community must act, and act together. But it may be long before the persons who compose this body be sufficiently touched with the Christian character, to join in the suppression of practices, to which they and the pub-

lic have been reconciled by causes which will reconcile the human mind to any thing, by habit and interest. Nevertheless, the effects of Christianity, even in this view, have been important. It has mitigated the conduct of war, and the treatment of captives. It has softened the administration of despotic, or of nominally despotic governments. It has abolished polygamy. It has restrained the licentiousness of divorces. It has put an end to the exposure of children and the immolation of slaves. It has suppressed the combats of gladiators,* and the impurities of religious rites. It has banished, if not unnatural vices, at least the toleration of them. It has greatly meliorated the condition of the laborious part, that is to say, of the mass of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly rest. In all countries, in which it is professed, it has produced numerous establishments for the relief of sickness and poverty; and, in some, a regular and general provision by law. It has triumphed over the slavery established in the Roman empire: it is contending, and I trust, will one day prevail, against the worse slavery of the West Indies.

A Christian writer,† so early as in the second century, has testified the resistance which Christianity made to wicked and licentious practices though established by law and by public usage:—"Neither in Parthia, do the Christians, though Parthians, use polygamy; nor in Persia, though Persians, do they marry their own daughters; nor among the Bactri or Galli, do they violate the sanctity of marriage; nor, wherever they are, do they suffer themselves to be overcome by ill-constituted laws and manners."

Socrates did not destroy the idolatry of Athens, or produce the slightest revolution in the manners of his country.

But the argument to which I recur, is, that the benefit of religion, being felt chiefly in the obscurity of private stations, necessarily escapes the observation of history. From the first general notification of Christianity to the present day, there have been in every age many millions, whose names were never heard of, made better by it, not only in their conduct, but in their disposition; and happier, not so much in their external circumstances, as in that which is *inter præcordia*, in that which alone deserves the name of happiness, the tranquillity and consolation of their thoughts. It has been, since its commencement, the author of happiness and virtue to millions and millions of the human race. Who is there that would not wish his son to be a Christian?

Christianity also, in every country in which it is professed, hath obtained a sensible, although not a complete influence, upon the public judgment of morals. And this is very important. For without the occasional correction which public opinion receives, by referring to some fixed standard of morality, no man can foretell into what extravagancies it might wander. Assassination might become as honourable as duelling; unnatural crimes be accounted as venial as

* Lipsius affirms (Sat. b. i. c. 12.), that the gladiatorial shows sometimes cost Europe twenty or thirty thousand lives in a month; and that not only the men, but even the women of all ranks, were passionately fond of these shows. See Bishop Porteous's Sermon XIII.

† Bardesanes, ap. Euseb. Præp. Evang. vi. 10.

fornication is wont to be accounted. In this way it is possible, that many may be kept in order by Christianity, who are not themselves Christians. They may be guided by the rectitude which it communicates to public opinion. Their consciences may suggest their duty truly, and they may ascribe these suggestions to a moral sense, or to the native capacity of the human intellect, when in fact they are nothing more than the public opinion, reflected from their own minds; an opinion, in a considerable degree, modified by the lessons of Christianity. "Certain it is, and this is a great deal to say, that the generality even of the meanest and most vulgar and ignorant people, have truer and worthier notions of God, more just and right apprehensions concerning his attributes and perfections, a deeper sense of the difference of good and evil, a greater regard to moral obligations and to the plain and most necessary duties of life, and a more firm and universal expectation of a future state of rewards and punishments, than, in any Heathen country, any considerable number of men were found to have had."*

After all, the value of Christianity is not to be appreciated by its *temporal* effects. The object of revelation is to influence human conduct in this life; but what is gained to happiness by that influence, can only be estimated by taking in the whole of human existence. Then, as hath already been observed, there may be also, great consequences of Christianity, which do not belong to it as a revelation. The effects of human salvation, of the mission, of the death, of the present, of the future agency of Christ may be universal, though the religion be not universally known.

Secondly, I assert that Christianity is charged with many consequences for which it is not responsible. I believe that religious motives have had no more to do in the formation of nine-tenths of the intolerant and persecuting laws, which in different countries have been established upon the subject of religion, than they have had to do in England with the making of the game-laws. These measures, although they have the Christian religion for their subject, are resolvable into a principle which Christianity certainly did not plant (and which Christianity could not universally condemn, because it is not universally wrong), which principle is no other than this, that they who are in possession of power do what they can to keep it. Christianity is answerable for no part of the mischief which has been brought upon the world by persecution, except that which has arisen from *conscientious* persecutors. Now these perhaps have never been either numerous or powerful. Nor is it to Christianity that even *their* mistake can fairly be imputed. They have been misled by an error not properly Christian or religious, but by an error in their moral philosophy. They pursued the particular, without adverting to the general consequence. Believing certain articles of faith, or a certain mode of worship, to be highly conducive, or perhaps essential, to salvation, they thought themselves bound to bring all they could, by every means, into them. And this they thought, without considering what would be the effect of such a conclusion, when adopted amongst mankind as a general rule of conduct. Had there been in the New Testament, what there are in the Koran, pre-

* Clarke, Ev. Nat. Rel. p. 206. ed. v.

cepts authorizing coercion in the propagation of the religion, and the use of violence towards unbelievers, the case would have been different. This distinction could not have been taken, nor this defence made.

I apologize for no species nor degree of persecution, but I think that even the fact has been exaggerated. The slave trade destroys more in a year, than the inquisition does in a hundred, or perhaps hath done since its foundation.

If it be objected, as I apprehend it will be, that Christianity is chargeable with every mischief, of which it has been the *occasion*, though not the motive; I answer, that, if the malevolent passions be there, the world will never want occasions. The noxious element will always find a conductor. Any point will produce an explosion. Did the applauded intercommunity of the Pagan theology preserve the peace of the Roman world? did it prevent oppressions, proscriptions, massacres, devastations? Was it bigotry that carried Alexander into the East, or brought Cæsar into Gaul? Are the nations of the world, into which Christianity hath not found its way, or from which it hath been banished, free from contentions? Are there contentions less ruinous and sanguinary? Is it owing to Christianity, or to the want of it, that the finest regions of the East, the countries *inter quatuor maria*, the peninsula of Greece, together with a great part of the Mediterranean coast, are at this day a desert? or that the banks of the Nile, whose constantly renewed fertility is not to be impaired by neglect, or destroyed by the ravages of war, serve only for the scene of a ferocious anarchy, or the supply of unceasing hostilities? Europe itself has known no religious wars for some centuries, yet has hardly ever been without war. Are the calamities, which at this day afflict it, to be imputed to Christianity? Hath Poland fallen by a Christian crusade? Hath the overthrow in France of civil order and security, been effected by the votaries of our religion, or by the foes? Amongst the awful lessons which the crimes and the miseries of that country afford to mankind, this is one; that, in order to be a persecutor, it is not necessary to be a bigot; that in rage and cruelty, in mischief and destruction, fanaticism itself can be outdone by infidelity.

Finally, If war, as it is now carried on between nations, produces less misery and ruin than formerly, we are indebted perhaps to Christianity for the change, more than to any other cause. Viewed therefore even in its relation to this subject, it appears to have been of advantage to the world. It hath humanized the conduct of wars; it hath ceased to excite them.

The differences of opinion, that have in all ages prevailed amongst Christians, fall very much within the alternative which has been stated. If we possessed the disposition which Christianity labours, above all other qualities, to inculcate, these differences would do little harm. If that disposition be wanting, other causes, even were these absent, would continually rise up to call forth the malevolent passions into action. Differences of opinions, when accompanied with mutual charity, which Christianity forbids them to violate, are for the most part innocent, and for some purposes useful. They promote inquiry, discussion, and knowledge. They help to keep up an attention to religious subjects, and a concern about them, which might be apt to

die away in the calm and silence of universal agreement. I do not know that it is in any degree true, that the influence of religion is the greatest, where there are the fewest dissenters.

CHAPTER VIII.

The conclusion.

IN religion, as in every other subject of human reasoning, much depends upon the *order* in which we dispose our inquiries. A man who takes up a system of divinity with a previous opinion that either every part must be true, or the whole false, approaches the discussion with great disadvantage. No other system, which is founded upon moral evidence, would bear to be treated in the same manner. Nevertheless, in a certain degree, we are all introduced to our religious studies, under this prejudication. And it cannot be avoided. The weakness of the human judgment in the early part of youth, yet its extreme susceptibility of impression, renders it necessary to furnish it with some opinions, and with some principles or other. Or indeed, without much express care, or much endeavour for this purpose, the tendency of the mind of man to assimilate itself to the habits of thinking and speaking which prevail around him, produces the same effect. That indifferency and suspense, that waiting and equilibrium of the judgment, which some require in religious matters, and which some would wish to be aimed at in the conduct of education, are impossible to be preserved. They are not given to the condition of human life.

It is a consequence of this institution that the doctrines of religion come to us before the proofs; and come to us with that mixture of explications and inferences from which no public creed is, or can be, free. And the effect which too frequently follows, from Christianity being presented to the understanding in this form, is, that when any articles, which appear as parts of it, contradict the apprehension of the persons to whom it is proposed, men of rash and confident tempers hastily and indiscriminately reject the whole. But is this to do justice, either to themselves, or to the religion? The rational way of treating a subject of such acknowledged importance is to attend, in the first place, to the general and substantial truth of its principles, and to that alone. When we once feel a foundation; when we once perceive a ground of credibility in its history, we shall proceed with safety to inquire into the interpretation of its records, and into the doctrines which have been deduced from them. Nor will it either endanger our faith, or diminish or alter our motives for obedience, if we should discover that these conclusions are formed with very different degrees of probability, and possess very different degrees of importance.

This conduct of the understanding, dictated by every rule of right reasoning, will uphold personal Christianity, even in those countries in which it is established under forms the most liable to difficulty and objection. It will also have the farther effect of guarding us against

the prejudices which are wont to arise in our minds to the disadvantage of religion, from observing the numerous controversies which are carried on amongst its professors, and likewise of inducing a spirit of lenity and moderation in our judgment, as well as in our treatment of those who stand, in such controversies, upon sides opposite to ours. What is clear in Christianity, we shall find to be sufficient, and to be infinitely valuable; what is dubious, unnecessary to be decided, or of very subordinate importance; and what is most obscure, will teach us to bear with the opinions which others may have formed upon the same subject. We shall say to those who the most widely dissent from us, what Augustine said to the worst heretics of his age: "Illi in vos sæviant qui nesciunt, cum quo labore verum inveniatur et, quàm difficilè caveantur errores;—qui nesciunt, cum quantâ difficultate sanetur oculus interioris hominis;—qui nesciunt, quibus suspiriis et gemitibus fiat ut ex quantulâcunque parte possit intelligi Deus."*

A judgment, moreover, which is once pretty well satisfied of the general truth of the religion, will not only thus discriminate in its doctrines, but will possess sufficient strength to overcome the reluctance of the imagination to admit articles of faith which are attended with difficulty of apprehension, if such articles of faith appear to be truly parts of the revelation. It was to be expected beforehand, that what related to the economy, and to the persons, of the invisible world which revelation professes to do, and which, if true, it actually does, should contain some points remote from our analogies, and from the comprehension of a mind which hath acquired all its ideas from sense and from experience.

It hath been my care, in the preceding work, to preserve the separation between evidences and doctrines as inviolable as I could; to remove from the primary question all considerations which have been unnecessarily joined with it; and to offer a defence to Christianity, which every Christian might read, without seeing the tenets in which he had been brought up attacked or decried: and it always afforded a satisfaction to my mind to observe that this was practicable; that few or none of our many controversies with one another affect or relate to the proofs of our religion; that the rent never descends to the foundation.

The truth of Christianity depends upon its leading facts, and upon them alone. Now of these we have evidence which ought to satisfy us, at least until it appear that mankind have ever been deceived by the same. We have some uncontested and incontestable points, to which the history of the human species hath nothing singular to offer. A Jewish peasant changed the religion of the world, and that, without force, without power, without support; without one natural source, or circumstance of attraction, influence, or success. Such a thing hath not happened in any other instance. The companions of this Person, after he himself had been put to death for his attempt, asserted his supernatural character, founded upon his supernatural operations: and, in testimony of the truth of their assertions, *i. e.* in consequence of their own belief of that truth, and in order

* Aug. contra Ep. Fund. cap. ii. n. 2, 3.

to communicate the knowledge of it to others, voluntarily entered upon lives of toil and hardship, and with a full experience of their danger, committed themselves to the last extremities of persecution. This hath not a parallel. More particularly, a very few days after this person had been publicly executed, and in the very city in which he was buried, these his companions declared with one voice that his body was restored to life; that they had seen him, handled him, ate with him, conversed with him; and in pursuance of their persuasion of the truth of what they told, preached his religion, with this strange fact as the foundation of it, in the face of those who had killed him, who were armed with the power of the country, and necessarily and naturally disposed to treat his followers as they had treated himself; and having done this upon the spot where the event took place, carried the intelligence of it abroad, in despite of difficulties and opposition, and where the nature of their errand gave them nothing to expect but derision, insult, and outrage.—This is without example. These three facts, I think, are certain, and would have been nearly so if the Gospels had never been written. The Christian story, as to these points, hath never varied. No other hath been set up against it. Every letter, every discourse, every controversy, amongst the followers of the religion; every book written by them, from the age of its commencement to the present time, in every part of the world in which it hath been professed, and with every sect into which it hath been divided (and we have letters and discourses written by contemporaries, by witnesses of the transaction, by persons themselves bearing a share in it, and other writings following that age in regular succession), *concur* in representing these facts in this manner. A religion, which now possesses the greatest part of the civilized world, unquestionably sprang up at Jerusalem at this time. Some account must be given of its origin; some cause assigned for its rise. All the accounts of this origin, all the explanations of this cause, whether taken from the writings of the early followers of the religion (in which, and in which perhaps alone, it could be expected that they should be distinctly unfolded), or from occasional notices in other writings of that or the adjoining age, either expressly allege the facts above stated as the means by which the religion was set up, or advert to its commencement in a manner which agrees with the supposition of these facts being true, and which testifies their operation and effects.

These propositions alone lay a foundation for our faith; for they prove the existence of a transaction, which cannot even in its most *general* parts be accounted for, upon any reasonable supposition, except that of the truth of the mission. But the particulars, the *detail* of the miracles or miraculous pretences (for such there necessarily must have been), upon which this unexampled transaction rested, and *for* which these men acted and suffered as they did act and suffer, it is undoubtedly of great importance to us to know. We *have* this detail from the fountain-head, from the persons themselves; in accounts written by eye-witnesses of the scene, by contemporaries and companions of those who were so; not in one book, but four, each containing enough for the verification of the religion, all agreeing in the fundamental parts of the history. We have the authenticity of

these books established, by more and stronger proofs than belong to almost any other ancient book whatever, and by proofs which widely distinguish them from any others claiming a similiar authority to theirs. If there were any good reason for doubt concerning the names to which these books are ascribed (which there is not, for they were never ascribed to any other, and we have evidence not long after their publication of their bearing the names which they now bear), their antiquity, of which there is no question, their reputation and authority amongst the early disciples of the religion, of which there is as little, from a valid proof that they must, in the main at least, have agreed with what the first teachers of the religion delivered.

When we open these ancient volumes, we discover in them marks of truth, whether we consider each in itself, or collate them with one another. The writers certainly knew something of what they were writing about, for they manifest an acquaintance with local circumstances, with the history and usages of the times, which could only belong to an inhabitant of that country, living in that age. In every narrative we perceive simplicity and undesignedness; the air and the language of reality. When we compare the different narratives together, we find them so varying as to repel all suspicion of confederacy; so agreeing under this variety, as to shew that the accounts had one real transaction for their common foundation; often attributing different actions and discourses, to the person whose history, or rather memoirs of whose history, they profess to relate, yet actions and discourses so similar, as very much to bespeak the same character; which is a coincidence, that, in such writers as they were, could only be the consequence of their writing from fact, and not from imagination.

These four narratives are confined to the history of the Founder of the religion, and end with his ministry. Since, however, it is certain that the affair went on, we cannot help being anxious to know *how* it proceeded. This intelligence hath come down to us in a work purporting to be written by a person, himself connected with the business during the first stages of its progress, taking up the story, where the former histories had left it, carrying on the narrative, oftentimes with great particularity, and throughout with the appearance of good sense,* information, and candour; stating all along the origin, and the only probable origin, of effects which unquestionably were produced, together with the natural consequences of situations which unquestionably did exist; and *confirmed* in the substance at least of the account, by the strongest possible accession of testimony which a history can receive, *original letters*, written by the person who is the principal subject of the history, written upon the business to which the history relates, and during the period, or soon after the period which the history comprises. No man can say, that this all together is not a body of strong historical evidence.

* See Peters' speech upon curing the cripple (Acts iii. 18.), the council of the apostles (xv.), Paul's discourse at Athens (xvii. 22.), before Agrippa (xxvi.). I notice these passages, both as fraught with good sense, and as free from the smallest tincture of enthusiasm.

When we reflect that some of those from whom the books proceeded, are related to have themselves wrought miracles, to have been the subject of miracles, or of supernatural assistance in propagating the religion, we may perhaps be led to think, that more credit, or a different kind of a credit, is due to these accounts, than what can be claimed by merely human testimony. But this is an argument which cannot be addressed to sceptics or unbelievers. A man must be a Christian before he can receive it. The inspiration of the historical Scriptures, the nature, degree, and extent, of that inspiration, are questions undoubtedly of serious discussion; but they are questions amongst Christians themselves, and not between them and others. The doctrine itself is by no means necessary to the belief of Christianity, which must, in the first instance at least, depend upon the ordinary maxims of historical credibility.*

In viewing the detail of miracles recorded in these books, we find every supposition negatived, by which they can be resolved into fraud or delusion. They were not secret, not momentary, not tentative, nor ambiguous; nor performed under the sanction of authority, with the spectators on their side, or in affirmance of tenets and practices already established. We find also the evidence alleged for them, and which evidence was by great numbers received, different from that upon which other miraculous accounts rest. It was contemporary, it was published upon the spot, it continued; it involved interest and questions, of the greatest magnitude; it contradicted the most fixed persuasions and prejudices of the persons to whom it was addressed; it required from those who accepted it, not a simple, indolent assent, but a change, from thenceforward, of principles and conduct, a submission to consequences the most serious and the most deterring, to loss and danger, to insult, outrage, and persecution. How such a story should be false, or, if false, how under such circumstances it should make its way, I think impossible to be explained; yet such the Christian story was, such were the circumstances under which it came forth, and in opposition to such difficulties did it prevail.

An event so connected with the religion, and with the fortunes, of the Jewish people, as one of their race, one born amongst them, establishing his authority and his law throughout a great portion of the civilized world, it was perhaps to be expected, should be noticed in the prophetic writings of that nation; especially when this Person, together with his own mission, caused also to be acknowledged the divine original of their institution, and by those who before had altogether rejected it. Accordingly we perceive in these writings various intimations *concurring* in the person and history of Jesus, in a manner, and in a degree, in which passages taken from these books could not be made to concur in any person arbitrarily assumed, or in any person except him who has been the author of great changes in the affairs and opinions of mankind. Of some of these predictions the weight depends a good deal upon the concurrence. Others possess great separate strength: one in particular does this in an eminent degree. It is an entire description, manifestly directed to one

* See Powell's Discourses, disc. xv. p. 245.

character and to one scene of things: it is extant in a writing, or collection of writings, declaredly prophetic; and it applies to Christ's character, and to the circumstances of his life and death, with considerable precision, and in a way which no diversity of interpretation hath, in my opinion, been able to confound. That the advent of Christ, and the consequences of it, should not have been more distinctly revealed in the Jewish sacred books, is, I think, in some measure accounted for by the consideration, that for the Jews to have foreseen the fall of their institution, and that it was to emerge at length into a more perfect and comprehensive dispensation, would have cooled too much, and relaxed their zeal for it, and their adherence to it, upon which zeal and adherence the preservation in the world of any remains, for many ages, of religious truth might in a great measure depend.

Of what a revelation discloses to mankind, one, and only one, question can properly be asked, Was it of importance to mankind to know, or to be better assured of? In this question, when we turn our thoughts to the great Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and of a future judgment, no doubt can possibly be entertained. He who gives me riches or honours, does nothing; he who even gives me health, does little in comparison with that which lays before me just grounds for expecting a restoration to life, and a day of account and retribution: which things Christianity hath done for millions.

Other articles of the Christian faith, although of infinite importance when placed beside any other topic of human enquiry, are only the adjuncts and circumstances of this. They are, however, such as appear worthy of the original to which we ascribe them. The moralite of the religion, whether taken from the precepts or the example of its Founder, or from the lessons of its primitive teachers, derived, as it should seem, from what had been inculcated by their Master, is, in all its parts, wise and pure; neither adapted to vulgar prejudices, nor flattering popular notions, nor excusing established practices, but calculated, in the matter of its instruction truly to promote human happiness, and in the form in which it was conveyed, to produce impression and effect; a morality, which, let it have proceeded from any person whatever, would have been satisfactory evidence of his good sense and integrity, of the soundness of his understanding and the probity of his designs; a morality, in every view of it, much more perfect than could have been expected from the natural circumstances and character of the person who delivered it; a morality, in a word, which is, and hath been, most beneficial to mankind.

Upon the greatest, therefore, of all possible occasions, and for a purpose of inestimable value, it pleased the Deity to vouchsafe a miraculous attestation. Having done this for the institution, when this alone could fix its authority, or give to it a beginning, he committed its future progress to the natural means of human communication, and to the influence of those causes by which human conduct and human affairs are governed. The seed, being sown, was left to vegetate; the leaven, being inserted, was left to ferment; and both according to the laws of nature: laws, nevertheless, disposed and con-

trolled by that Providence which conducts the affairs of the universe, though by an influence inscrutable, and generally undistinguishable by us. And in this, Christianity is analogous to most other provisions for happiness. The provision is made; and, being made, is left to act according to laws, which, forming a part of a more general system, regulate this particular subject, in common with many others.

Let the constant recurrence to our observation of contrivance, design, and wisdom, in the works of nature, once fix upon our minds the belief of a God, and after that all is easy. In the counsels of a being possessed of the power and disposition which the Creator of the universe must possess, it is not improbable that there should be a future state; it is not improbable that we should be acquainted with it. A future state rectifies every thing; because, if moral agents be made, in the last event, happy or miserable, according to their conduct in the stations and under the circumstances in which they are placed, it seems not very material by the operation of what causes, according to what rules, or even, if you please to call it so, by what chance or caprice, these stations are assigned, or these circumstances determined. This hypothesis, therefore, solves all that objection to the divine care and goodness, which the promiscuous distribution of good and evil (I do not mean in the doubtful advantages of riches and grandeur, but in the unquestionably important distinctions of health and sickness, strength and infirmity, bodily ease and pain, mental alacrity and depression) is apt on so many occasions to create. This one truth changes the nature of things; gives order to confusion; makes the moral world of a piece with the natural.

Nevertheless, a higher degree of assurance than that to which it is possible to advance this, or any argument drawn from the light of nature, was necessary, especially to overcome the shock which the imagination and the senses receive from the effects and the appearances of death, and the obstruction which thence arises to the expectation of either a continual or a future existence. This difficulty, although of a nature, no doubt, to act very forcibly, will be found, I think, upon reflection, to reside more in our habits of apprehension, than in the subject; and that the giving way to it, when we have any reasonable grounds for the contrary, is rather an indulging of the imagination, than any thing else. Abstractedly considered, that is, considered without relation to the difference which habit, and merely habit, produces in our faculties and modes of apprehension, I do not see any thing more in the resurrection of a dead man, than in the conception of a child; except it be this, that the one comes into his world with a system of prior consciousness about him, which the other does not: and no person will say, that he knows enough of either subject to perceive, that this circumstance makes such a difference in the two cases, that the one should be easy, and the other impossible; the one natural, the other not so. To the first man, the succession of the species would be as incomprehensible, as the resurrection of the dead is to us.

Thought is different from motion, perception from impact: the

individuality of a mind is hardly consistent with the divisibility of an extended substance; or its volition, that is, its power of originating motion, with the inertness which cleaves to every portion of matter which our observation or our experiments can reach. These distinctions lead us to an *immaterial* principle: at least, they do this; they so negative the mechanical properties of matter, in the constitution of a sentient, still more of a rational being, that no argument drawn from these properties, can be of any great weight in opposition to other reasons, when the question respects the changes of which such a nature is capable, or the manner in which these changes are effected. Whatever thought be, or whatever it depend upon, the regular experience of *sleep* makes one thing concerning it certain, that it can be completely suspended, and completely restored.

If any one find it too great a strain upon his thoughts, to admit the notion of a substance strictly immaterial, that is, from which extension and solidity are excluded, he can find no difficulty in allowing, that a particle as small as a particle of light, minuter than all conceivable dimensions, may just as easily be the depositary, the organ, and the vehicle, of consciousness, as the congeries of animal substance which forms a human body, or the human brain; that, being so, it may transfer a proper identity to whatever shall hereafter be united to it; may be safe amidst the destruction of its integuments; may connect the natural with the spiritual, the corruptible with the glorified body. If it be said, that the mode and means of all this is imperceptible by our senses, it is only what is true of the most important agencies and operations. The great powers of nature are all invisible. Gravitation, electricity, magnetism, though constantly present, and constantly exerting their influence; though within us, near us, and about us; though diffused throughout all space, overspreading the surface, or penetrating the contexture, of all bodies with which we are acquainted, depend upon substances and actions which are totally concealed from our senses. The Supreme Intelligence is so himself.

But whether these or any other attempts to satisfy the imagination, bear any resemblance to the truth, or whether the imagination, which, as I have said before, is a mere slave of habit, *can* be satisfied or not; when a future state, and the revelation of a future state, is not only perfectly consistent with the attributes of the Being who governs the universe; but when it is more, when it alone removes the appearances of contrariety which attend the operations of his will towards creatures capable of comparative merit and demerit, of reward and punishment; when a strong body of historical evidence, confirmed by many internal tokens of truth and authenticity, gives us just reason to believe that such a revelation hath actually been made; we ought to set our minds at rest with the assurance, that in the resources of Creative Wisdom, expedients cannot be wanted to carry into effect what the Deity hath purposed: that either a new and mighty influence will descend upon the human world to resuscitate extinguished consciousness; or that amidst the other wonderful contrivances with which the universe abounds, and by some of which we see animal life, in many instances, assuming improved forms of existence, acquiring new organs, new perceptions, and new sources of enjoyment, pro-

vision is also made, though by methods secret to us (as all the great processes of nature are), for conducting the object of God's moral government, through the necessary changes of their frame, to those final distinctions of happiness and misery, which he hath declared to be reserved for obedience and transgression, for virtue and vice, for the use and the neglect, the right and the wrong employment, of the faculties and opportunities with which he hath been pleased, severally to intrust and to try us.

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MORAL AND POLITICAL

PHILOSOPHY.

BY

WILLIAM PALEY, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF CARLISLE.

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HENRY FISHER, SON, AND P. JACKSON,

38, NEWGATE STREET.

1828.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

EDMUND LAW, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

My Lord,

Had the obligations which I owe to your Lordship's kindness been much less, or much fewer, than they are; had personal gratitude left any place in my mind for deliberation or for inquiry; in selecting a name which every reader might confess to be prefixed with propriety to a work, that, in many of its parts, bears no obscure relation to the general principles of natural and revealed religion, I should have found myself directed, by many considerations, to that of the Bishop of Carlisle. A long life spent in the most interesting of all human pursuits—the investigation of moral and religious truth, inconstant and unwearied endeavours to advance the discovery, communication, and success, of both; a life so occupied, and arrived at that period which renders every life venerable, commands respect by a title which no virtuous mind will dispute, which no mind sensible of the importance of these studies to the supreme concernments of mankind will not rejoice to see acknowledged. Whatever difference, or whatever opposition, some who peruse your Lordship's writings may perceive between your conclusions and their own, the good and wise of all persuasions will revere that industry, which has for its object the illustration or defence of our common Christianity. Your Lordship's researches have never lost sight of one purpose, namely, to recover the simplicity of the gospel from beneath that load of unauthorized additions, which the ignorance of some ages, and the learning of others, the superstition of weak, and the craft of designing men, have (unhappily for its interest) heaped upon it. And this purpose, I am convinced, was dictated by the purest motive; by a firm, and I think, a just opinion, that whatever renders religion more rational, renders it more credible; that he who, by a diligent and faithful examination of the original records, dismisses from the system one article which contradicts the apprehension, the experience, or the reasoning, of mankind, does more towards recommending the belief, and, with the belief, the influence, of Christianity, to the understandings and consciences of serious inquirers, and through them to universal reception and authority, than

can be effected by a thousand contenders for creeds and ordinances of human establishment.

When the doctrine of Transubstantiation had taken possession of the Christian world, it was not without the industry of learned men, that it came at length to be discovered that no such doctrine was contained in the New Testament. But had these excellent persons done nothing more by their discovery, than abolished an innocent superstition, or changed some directions in the ceremonial of public worship, they had merited little of that veneration, with which the gratitude of Protestant churches remembers their services. What they did for mankind, was this: they exonerated Christianity of a weight which sunk it. If indolence or timidity had checked these exertions, or suppressed the fruit and publication of these inquiries, is it too much to affirm that infidelity would at this day have been universal?

I do not mean, my Lord, by the mention of this example to insinuate, that any popular opinion which your Lordship may have encountered, ought to be compared with Transubstantiation, or that the assurance with which we reject that extravagant absurdity is attainable in the controversies in which your Lordship has been engaged; but I mean by calling to mind those great reformers of the public faith, to observe, or rather to express my own persuasion, that to restore the purity, is most effectually to promote the progress of Christianity; and that the same virtuous motive which hath sanctified their labours, suggested yours. At a time when some men appear not to perceive any good, and others to suspect an evil tendency, in that spirit of examination and research which is gone forth in Christian countries, this testimony is become due, not only to the probity of your Lordship's views, but to the general cause of intellectual and religious liberty.

That your Lordship's life may be prolonged in health and honour; that it may continue to afford an instructive proof, how serene and easy old age can be made by the memory of important and well-intended labours, by the possession of public and deserved esteem, by the presence of many grateful relatives; above all, by the resources of religion, by an unshaken confidence in the designs of a "faithful Creator," and a settled trust in the truth and in the promises of Christianity; is the fervent prayer of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's dutiful,

Most obliged,

And most devoted servant,

WILLIAM PALEY.

Carlisle, Feb. 10, 1785.

PREFACE.

In the treatises that I have met with upon the subject of *morals*, I appear to myself to have remarked the following imperfections;—either that the principle was erroneous, or that it was indistinctly explained, or that the rules deduced from it were not sufficiently adapted to real life and to actual situations. The writings of Grotius, and the larger work of Puffendorff, are of too *forensic* a cast, too much mixed up with the civil law and with the jurisprudence of Germany, to answer precisely the design of a system of ethics,—the direction of private consciences in the general conduct of human life. Perhaps, indeed, they are not to be regarded as institutes of morality calculated to instruct an individual in his duty, so much as a species of law books and law authorities, suited to the practice of those courts of justice, whose decisions are regulated by general principles of natural equity, in conjunction with the maxims of the Roman code; of which kind, I understand, there are many upon the Continent. To which may be added, concerning both these authors, that they are more occupied in describing the rights and usages of independent communities, than is necessary in a work which professes not to adjust the correspondence of nations, but to delineate the offices of domestic life. The profusion also of classical quotations with which many of their pages abound, seems to me a fault from which it will not be easy to excuse them. If these extracts be intended as decorations of style, the composition is overloaded with ornaments of one kind. To any thing more than ornament they can make no claim. To propose them as serious arguments, gravely to attempt to establish or fortify a moral duty by the testimony of a Greek or Roman poet, is to trifle with the attention of the reader, or rather to take it off from all just principles of reasoning in morals.

Of our own writers in this branch of philosophy, I find none that I think perfectly free from the three objections which I have stated. There is likewise a fourth property observable almost in all of them, namely, that they divide too much the law of Nature from the precepts of Revelation; some authors industriously declining the mention of Scripture authorities, as belonging to a different province; and others reserving them for a separate volume: which appears to me much the same defect, as if a commentator on the laws of England should content himself with stating upon each head the common law of the land, without taking any notice of acts of parliament; or should choose to give his readers the common law in one book, and the statute law in another. "When the obligations of morality are taught," says a pious and celebrated writer, "let the sanctions of Christianity never be forgotten: by which it will be shewn that they give strength and lustre to each other: religion will appear to be the voice of reason, and morality will be the will of God." *

The *manner* also in which modern writers have treated of subjects of

* Preface to "The Preceptor," by Dr. Johnson.

morality, is, in my judgment, liable to much exception. It has become of late a fashion to deliver moral institutes in strings or series of detached propositions, without subjoining a continued argument or regular dissertation to any of them. This sententious apophthegmatizing style, by crowding propositions and paragraphs too fast upon the mind, and by carrying the eye of the reader from subject to subject in too quick a succession, gains not a sufficient hold upon the attention, to leave either the memory furnished, or the understanding satisfied. However useful a syllabus of topics or a series of propositions may be in the hands of a lecturer, or as a guide to a student, who is supposed to consult other books, or to institute upon each subject researches of his own, the method is by no means convenient for ordinary readers; because few readers are such *thinkers* as to want only a hint to set their thoughts at work upon; or such as will pause and tarry at every proposition, till they have traced out its dependency, proof, relation, and consequences, before they permit themselves to step on to another. A respectable writer of this class* has comprised his doctrine of slavery in the three following propositions:—

"No one is born a slave; because every one is born with all his original rights."

"No one can become a slave; because no one from being a person can, in the language of the Roman law, become a thing, or subject of property."

"The supposed property of the master in the slave, therefore, is matter of usurpation, not of right."

It may be possible to deduce from these few adages, such a theory of the primitive rights of human nature, as will evince the illegality of slavery; but surely an author requires too much of his reader, when he expects him to make these deductions for himself; or to supply, perhaps from some remote chapter of the same treatise, the several proofs and explanations which are necessary to render the meaning and truth of these assertions intelligible.

There is a fault, the opposite of this, which some moralists who have adopted a different, and, I think, a better plan of composition, have not always been careful to avoid; namely, the dwelling upon verbal and elementary distinctions, with a labour and prolixity proportioned much more to the subtlety of the question, than to its value and importance in the prosecution of the subject. A writer upon the law of nature,† whose explications in every part of philosophy, though always diffuse, are often very successful, has employed three long sections in endeavouring to prove that "permissions are not laws." The discussion of this controversy, however essential it might be to dialectic precision, was certainly not necessary to the progress of a work designed to describe the duties and obligations of civil life. The reader becomes impatient when he is detained by disquisitions which have no other object than the settling of terms and phrases; and, what is worse, they for whose use such books are chiefly intended, will not be persuaded to read them at all.

I am led to propose these strictures not by any propensity to depre-

* Dr. Fergusson, author of "Institutes of Moral Philosophy." 1767.
† Dr. Rutherforth, author of "Institutes of Natural Law."

ciate the labours of my predecessors, much less to invite a comparison between the merits of their performances and my own; but solely by the consideration that when a writer offers a book to the public, upon a subject on which the public are already in possession of many others, he is bound by a kind of literary justice to inform his readers, distinctly and specifically, what it is he professes to supply, and what he expects to improve. The imperfections above enumerated, are those which I have endeavoured to avoid or remedy. Of the execution the reader must judge; but this was the design.

Concerning the *principle* of morals it would be premature to speak: but concerning the manner of unfolding and explaining that principle, I have somewhat which I wish to be remarked. An experience of nine years in the office of a public tutor in one of the universities, and in that department of education to which these chapters relate, afforded me frequent occasions to observe, that in discoursing to young minds upon topics of morality, it required much more pains to make them perceive the difficulty, than to understand the solution: that, unless the subject was so drawn up to a point, as to exhibit the full force of an objection, or the exact place of a doubt, before any explanation was entered upon,—in other words, unless some curiosity was excited before it was attempted to be satisfied, the labour of the teacher was lost. When information was not desired, it was seldom, I found, retained. I have made this observation my guide in the following work: that is, upon each occasion I have endeavoured, before I suffered myself to proceed in the disquisition, to put the reader in complete possession of the question; and to do it in the way that I thought most likely to stir up his own doubts and solicitude about it.

In pursuing the principle of morals through the detail of cases to which it is applicable, I have had in view to accommodate both the choice of the subjects and the manner of handling them, to the situations which arise in the life of an inhabitant of this country in these times. This is the thing that I think to be principally wanting in former treatises; and perhaps the chief advantage which will be found in mine. I have examined no doubts, I have discussed no obscurities, I have encountered no errors, I have adverted to no controversies, but what I have seen actually to exist. If some of the questions treated of, appear to a more instructed reader minute or puerile, I desire such reader to be assured, that I have found them occasions of difficulty to young minds; and what I have observed in young minds, I should expect to meet with in all who approach these subjects for the first time. Upon each article of human duty, I have combined with the conclusions of reason the declarations of Scripture, when they are to be had, as of co-ordinate authority, and as both terminating in the same sanctions.

In the manner of the work, I have endeavoured so to attemper the opposite plans above animadverted upon, as that the reader may not accuse me either of too much haste, or too much delay. I have bestowed upon each subject enough of dissertation to give a body and substance to the chapter in which it is treated of, as well as coherence and perspicuity: on the other hand, I have seldom, I hope, exercised the patience of the reader by the length and prolixity of my essays, or disappointed that patience at last by the tenuity and unimportance of the conclusion.

There are two particulars in the following work, for which it may be thought necessary that I should offer some excuse. The first of which is, that I have scarcely ever referred to any other book; or mentioned the name of the author whose thoughts, and sometimes, possibly, whose very expressions, I have adopted. My method of writing has constantly been this: to extract what I could from my own stores and my own reflections in the first place; to put down that, and afterward to consult upon each subject such readings as fell in my way: which order, I am convinced, is the only one whereby any person can keep his thoughts from sliding into other men's trains. The effect of such a plan upon the production itself will be, that whilst some parts in matter or manner may be new, others will be little else than a repetition of the old. I make no pretensions to perfect originality; I claim to be something more than a mere compiler. Much, no doubt, is borrowed; but the fact is, that the notes for this work having been prepared for some years, and such things having been from time to time inserted in them as appeared to me worth preserving, and such insertions made commonly without the name of the author from whom they were taken, I should, at this time, have found a difficulty in recovering those names with sufficient exactness to be able to render to every man his own. Nor, to speak the truth, did it appear to me worth while to repeat the search merely for this purpose. When authorities are relied upon, names must be produced: when a discovery has been made in science, it may be unjust to borrow the invention without acknowledging the author. But in an argumentative treatise, and upon a subject which allows no place for discovery or invention, properly so called; and in which all that can belong to a writer is his mode of reasoning, or his judgment of probabilities; I should have thought it superfluous, had it been easier to me than it was, to have interrupted my text, or crowded my margin, with references to every author whose sentiments I have made use of. There is, however, one work to which I owe so much, that it would be ungrateful not to confess the obligation: I mean the writings of the late Abraham Tucker, Esq. part of which were published by himself, and the remainder since his death, under the title of "The Light of Nature pursued, by Edward Search, Esq." I have found in this writer more original thinking and observation upon the several subjects that he has taken in hand, than in any other, not to say, than in all others put together. His talent also for illustration is unrivalled. But his thoughts are diffused through a long, various, and irregular work. I shall account it no mean praise, if I have been sometimes able to dispose into method, to collect into heads and articles, or to exhibit in more compact and tangible masses, what, in that otherwise excellent performance, is spread over too much surface.

The next circumstance for which some apology may be expected, is the joining of moral and political philosophy together, or the addition of a book of politics to a system of ethics. Against this objection, if it be made one, I might defend myself by the example of many approved writers, who have treated *de officiis hominis et civis*, or, as some choose to express it, "of the rights and obligations of man, in his individual and social capacity," in the same book. I might allege, also, that the part a member of the commonwealth shall take in poli-

tical contentions, the vote he shall give, the counsels he shall approve, the support he shall afford, or the opposition he shall make, to any system of public measures,—is as much a question of personal duty, as much concerns the conscience of the individual who deliberates, as the determination of any doubt which relates to the conduct of private life; that consequently political philosophy is, properly speaking, a continuation of moral philosophy; or rather indeed a part of it, supposing moral philosophy to have for its aim the information of the human conscience in every deliberation that is likely to come before it. I might avail myself of these excuses, if I wanted them; but the vindication upon which I rely is the following:—In stating the principle of morals, the reader will observe that I have employed some industry in explaining the theory, and shewing the necessity of *general rules*; without the full and constant consideration of which I am persuaded that no system of moral philosophy can be satisfactory or consistent. This foundation being laid, or rather this habit being formed, the discussion of political subjects, to which, more than to almost any other, general rules are applicable, became clear and easy. Whereas, had these topics been assigned to a distinct work, it would have been necessary to have repeated the same rudiments, to have established over again the same principles, as those which we had already exemplified, and rendered familiar to the reader, in the former parts of this. In a word, if there appear to any one too great a diversity, or too wide a distance, between the subjects treated of in the course of the present volume, let him be reminded, that the doctrine of general rules pervades and connects the whole.

It may not be improper, however, to admonish the reader, that, under the name of *politics*, he is not to look for those occasional controversies, which the occurrences of the present day, or any temporary situation of public affairs, may excite; and most of which, if not beneath the dignity, it is beside the purpose, of a philosophical institution to advert to. He will perceive that the several disquisitions are framed with a reference to the condition of this country, and of this government: but it seemed to me to belong to the design of a work like the following, not so much to discuss each altercated point with the particularity of a political pamphlet upon the subject, as to deliver those universal principles, and to exhibit that mode and train of reasoning in politics, by the due application of which every man might be enabled to attain to just conclusions of his own. I am not ignorant of an objection that has been advanced against all abstract speculations concerning the origin, principle, or limitation, of civil authority; namely, that such speculations possess little or no influence upon the conduct either of the state or of the subject, of the governors or the governed; nor are attended with any useful consequences to either; that in times of tranquillity they are not wanted; in times of confusion they are never heard. This representation, however, in my opinion, is not just. Times of tumult, it is true, are not the times to learn; but the choice which men make of their side and party, in the most critical occasions of the commonwealth, may nevertheless depend upon the lessons they have received, the books they have read, and the opinions they have imbibed, in seasons of leisure and quietness. Some judicious persons, who were present at Geneva during the troubles

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MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

BOOK I.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Definition and use of the science.

MORAL Philosophy, Morality, Ethics, Casuistry, Natural Law, mean all the same thing; namely, *that science which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it.*

The use of such a study depends upon this, that, without it, the rules of life, by which men are ordinarily governed, oftentimes mislead them, through a defect either in the rule, or in the application.

These rules are, the Law of Honour, the Law of the Land, and the Scriptures.

CHAPTER II.

The law of Honour.

THE Law of Honour is a system of rules constructed by people of fashion, and calculated to facilitate their intercourse with one another, and for no other purpose.

Consequently, nothing is adverted to by the Law of Honour, but what tends to incommode this intercourse.

Hence this law only prescribes and regulates the duties *betwixt equals;* omitting such as relate to the Supreme Being, as well as those which we owe to our inferiors.

For which reason, profaneness, neglect of public worship or private devotion, cruelty to servants, rigorous treatment of tenants or other dependants, want of charity to the poor, injuries done to tradesmen by insolvency or delay of payment, with numberless examples of the

same kind, are accounted no breaches of honour; because a man is not a less agreeable companion for these vices, nor the worse to deal with, in those concerns which are usually transacted between one gentleman and another.

Again; the Law of Honour being constituted by men occupied in the pursuit of pleasure, and for the mutual conveniency of such men, will be found, as might be expected from the character and design of the law-makers, to be, in most instances, favourable to the licentious indulgence of the natural passions,

Thus it allows of fornication, adultery, drunkenness, prodigality, duelling, and of revenge in the extreme; and lays no stress upon the virtues opposite to these.

CHAPTER III.

The law of the land.

THAT part of mankind, who are beneath the Law of Honour often make the Law of the Land their rule of life: that is, they are satisfied with themselves, so long as they do or omit nothing, for the doing or omitting of which the law can punish them.

Whereas every system of human laws, considered as a rule of life, labours under the two following defects:

I. Human laws omit many duties, as not objects of compulsion; such as piety to God, bounty to the poor, forgiveness of injuries, education of children, gratitude to benefactors.

The law never speaks but to command, nor commands but where it can compel: consequently those duties, which by their nature must be *voluntary*, are left out of the statute-book, as lying beyond the reach of its operation and authority.

II. Human laws permit, or, which is the same thing, suffer to go unpunished, many crimes, because they are incapable of being defined by any previous description.—Of which nature are luxury, prodigality, partiality in voting at those elections in which the qualifications of the candidate ought to determine the success, caprice in the disposition of men's fortunes at their death, disrespect to parents, and a multitude of similar examples.

For, this is the alternative: either the law must define beforehand and with precision the offences which it punishes; or it must be left to the *discretion* of the magistrate, to determine upon each particular accusation, whether it constitute that offence which the law designed to punish, or not; which is, in effect, leaving to the magistrate to punish or not to punish, at his pleasure, the individual who is brought before him; which is just so much tyranny. Where, therefore, as in the instances above mentioned, the distinction between right and wrong is of too subtile or of too secret a nature to be ascertained by any preconcerted language, the law of most countries, especially of free states, rather than commit the liberty of the subject to the discretion of the magistrate, leaves men in such cases to themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

The Scriptures.

WHOEVER expects to find in the Scriptures a specific direction for every moral doubt that arises, looks for more than he will meet with. And to what a magnitude such a detail of particular precepts would have enlarged the sacred volume, may be partly understood from the following consideration:—The laws of this country, including the acts of the legislature, and the decisions of our supreme courts of justice, are not contained in fewer than fifty folio volumes; and yet it is not once in ten attempts that you can find the case you look for, in any law-book whatever; to say nothing of those numerous points of conduct, concerning which the law professes not to prescribe or determine any thing. Had then the same particularity which obtains in human laws, so far as they go, been attempted in the Scriptures, throughout the whole extent of morality, it is manifest they would have been by much too bulky to be either read or circulated; or rather, as St. John says, "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

Morality is taught in Scripture in this wise.—General rules are laid down, of piety, justice, benevolence, and purity: such as, worshipping God in spirit and in truth; doing as we would be done by; loving our neighbour as ourself; forgiving others, as we expect forgiveness from God; that mercy is better than sacrifice; that not that which entereth into a man (nor, by parity of reason, any ceremonial pollutions), but that which proceedeth from the heart, defileth him. These rules are occasionally illustrated, either by *fictitious examples*, as in the parable of the good Samaritan; and of the cruel servant, who refused to his fellow-servant that indulgence and compassion which his master had shewn to him: *or in instances which actually presented themselves*, as in Christ's reproof of his disciples at the Samaritan village; his praise of the poor widow, who cast in her last mite; his censure of the Pharisees who chose out the chief rooms,—and of the tradition, whereby they evaded the command to sustain their indigent parents: *or, lastly, in the resolution of questions, which those who were about our Saviour proposed to him;* as his answer to the young man who asked him, "What lack I yet?" and to the honest scribe, who had found out, even in that age and country, that "to love God and his neighbour, was more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifice."

And this is in truth the way in which all practical sciences are taught, as Arithmetic, Grammar, Navigation, and the like.—Rules are laid down, and examples are subjoined: not that these examples are the cases, much less all the cases, which will actually occur; but by way only of explaining the principle of the rule, and as so many specimens of the method of applying it. The chief difference is, that the examples in Scripture are not annexed to the rules with the didactic regularity to which we are now-a-days accustomed, but delivered dispersedly, as particular occasions suggested them; which gave them,

however (especially to those who heard them, and were present to the occasions which, produced them), an energy and persuasion, much beyond what the same or any instances would have appeared with, in their places in a system.

Beside this, the Scriptures commonly presuppose in the persons to whom they speak, a knowledge of the principles of natural justice; and are employed not so much to teach *new* rules of morality, as to enforce the practice of it by *new* sanctions, and by a *greater certainty;* which last seems to be the proper business of a revelation from God, and what was most wanted.

Thus the "unjust, covenant-breakers, and extortioners," are condemned in Scripture, supposing it known, or leaving it, where it admits of doubt, to moralists to determine, what injustice, extortion, or breach of covenant, are.

The above considerations are intended to prove that the Scriptures do not supersede the use of the science of which we profess to treat, and at the same time to acquit them of any charge of imperfection or insufficiency on that account.

CHAPTER V.

The moral sense.

"THE father of *Caius Toranius* had been proscribed by the triumvirate. *Caius Toranius*, coming over to the interests of that party, discovered to the officers, who were in pursuit of his father's life, the place where he concealed himself, and gave them withal a description, by which they might distinguish his person, when they found him. The old man, more anxious for the safety and fortunes of his son, than about the little that might remain of his own life, began immediately to inquire of the officers who seized him, whether his son was well, whether he had done his duty to the satisfaction of his generals. "That son (replied one of the officers), so dear to thy affections, betrayed thee to us; by his information thou art apprehended, and diest. The officer with this struck a poniard to his heart, and the unhappy parent fell, not so much affected by his fate, as by the means to which he owed it."*

Now the question is, whether, if this story were related to the wild boy, caught some years ago in the woods of Hanover, or to a savage without experience, and without instruction, cut off in his infancy from all intercourse with his species, and, consequently, under no possible influence of example, authority, education, sympathy, or habit;

* "Caius Toranius triumvirûm partes secutus proscripti patris sui prætorii et ornati viri latebras, ætatem, notasque corporis, quibus agnosci posset, centurionibus edidit, qui eum persecuti sunt. Senex de filii magis vitâ et incrementis quàm de reliquo spiritu suo solicitus, an incolumis esset, et an imperatoribus satisfaceret, interrogare eos cœpit. E quibus unus: "Ab illo," inquit, "quem tantoperè diligis demonstratus nostro ministerio, filii indicio occideris:" protinusque pectus ejus gladio trajecit. Collapsus itaque est infelix, auctore cædis, quàm ipsâ cæde, miserior."—Valer. Max. lib. ix. cap. 11.

whether, I say, such a one would feel, upon the relation, any degree of *that sentiment of disapprobation of Toranius's conduct* which we feel or not?

They who maintain the existence of a moral sense; of innate maxims; of a natural conscience; that the love of virtue and hatred of vice are instinctive, or the perception of right and wrong intuitive (all which are only different ways of expressing the same opinion), affirm that he would.

They who deny the existence of a moral sense, &c. affirm that he would not.

And upon this issue is joined.

As the experiment has never been made, and from the difficulty of procuring a subject (not to mention the impossibility of proposing the question to him, if we had one), is never likely to be made, what would be the event, can only be judged of from probable reasons.

They who contend for the affirmative, observe, that we approve examples of generosity, gratitude, fidelity, &c. and condemn the contrary, instantly, without deliberation, without having any interest of our own concerned in them, oft-times without being conscious of, or able to give any reason for, our approbation: that this approbation is uniform and universal, the same sorts of conduct being approved or disapproved in all ages and countries of the world; circumstances, say they, which strongly indicate the operation of an instinct or moral sense.

On the other hand, answers have been given to most of these arguments, by the patrons of the opposite system; and,

First, as to the *uniformity* above alleged, they controvert the fact. They remark, from authentic accounts of historians and travellers, that there is scarcely a single vice which, in some age or country of the world, has not been countenanced by public opinion: that in one country, it is esteemed an office of piety in children to sustain their aged parents; in another, to despatch them out of the way: that suicide, in one age of the world, has been heroism, is in another felony: that theft, which is punished by most laws, by the laws of Sparta was not unfrequently rewarded: that the promiscuous commerce of the sexes, although condemned by the regulations and censure of all civilized nations, is practised by the savages of the tropical regions without reserve, compunction, or disgrace; that crimes of which it is no longer permitted us even to speak, have had their advocates amongst the sages of very renowned times; that, if an inhabitant of the polished nations of Europe be delighted with the appearance, wherever he meets with it, of happiness, tranquillity, and comfort, a wild American is no less diverted with the writhings and contortions of a victim at the stake; that even amongst ourselves, and in the present improved state of moral knowledge, we are far from a perfect consent in our opinions or feelings: that you shall hear duelling alternately reprobated or applauded, according to the sex, age, or station, of the person you converse with; that the forgiveness of injuries and insults is accounted by one sort of people magnanimity, by another meanness: that in the above instances, and perhaps in most

others, moral approbation follows the fashions and institutions of the country we live in; which fashions also and institutions themselves have grown out of the exigencies, the climate, situation, or local circumstances, of the country; or have been set up by the authority of an arbitrary chieftain, or the unaccountable caprice of the multitude; —all which, they observe, looks very little like the steady hand and indelible characters of Nature. But,

Secondly, Because, after these exceptions and abatements, it cannot be denied but that some sorts of actions command and receive the esteem of mankind *more* than others; and that the approbation of them is general though not universal; as to this they say, that the general approbation of virtue, even in instances where we have no interest of our own to induce us to it, may be accounted for, without the assistance of a moral sense; thus:

"Having experienced, in some instance, a particular conduct to be beneficial to ourselves, or observed that it would be so, a sentiment of approbation rises up in our minds; which sentiment afterward accompanies the idea or mention of the same conduct, although the private advantage which first excited it no longer exist."

And this continuance of the passion, after the reason of it has ceased, is nothing more, say they, than what happens in other cases; especially in the love of money, which is in no person so eager as it is oftentimes found to be in a rich old miser, without family to provide for, or friend to oblige by it, and to whom consequently it is no longer (and he may be sensible of it too) of any real use or value; yet is this man so much overjoyed with gain, and mortified by losses as he was the first day he opened his shop, and when his very subsistence depended upon his success in it.

By these means the custom of approving certain actions *commenced:* and when once such a custom hath got footing in the world, it is no difficult thing to explain how it is transmitted and continued; for *then* the greatest part of those who approve of virtue, approve of it from authority, by imitation, and from a habit of approving such and such actions, inculcated in early youth, and receiving, as men grow up, continual accessions of strength and vigour, from censure and encouragement, from the books they read, the conversations they hear, the current application of epithets, the general turn of language, and the various other causes by which it universally comes to pass, that a society of men, touched in the feeblest degree with the same passion, soon communicate to one another a great degree of it.* This is the case with most of us at present; and is the cause also, that the *process of association*, described in the last paragraph but one, is little now either perceived or wanted.

* "From instances of popular tumults, seditions, factions, panics, and of all passions which are shared with a multitude, we may learn the influence of society, in exciting and supporting any emotion; while the most ungovernable disorders are raised, we find, by that means, from the slightest and most frivolous occasions. He must be more or less than man, who kindles not in the common blaze. What wonder then, that moral sentiments are found of such influence in life, though springing from principles which may appear, at first sight, somewhat small and delicate?" Hume's Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, sect. ix. p. 326.

Amongst the causes assigned for the continuance and diffusion of the same moral sentiments amongst mankind, we have mentioned *imitations*. The efficacy of this principle is most observable in children: indeed, if there be any thing in them which deserves the name of an *instinct*, it is their *propensity to imitation*. Now there is nothing which children imitate or apply more readily than expressions of affection and aversion, of approbation, hatred, resentment, and the like; and when these passions and expressions are once connected, which they soon will be by the same association, which unites words with their ideas, the passion will follow the expression, and attach upon the object to which the child has been accustomed to apply the epithet. In a word, when almost every thing else is learned by *imitation*, can we wonder to find the same cause concerned in the generation of our moral sentiments?

Another considerable objection to the system of moral instincts is this, that there are no maxims in the science which can well be deemed *innate*, as none perhaps can be assigned, which are absolutely and universally *true*: in other words, which do not *bend* to circumstances. Veracity, which seems, if any be, a natural duty, is *excused* in many cases towards an enemy, a thief, or a madman. The obligation of promises, which is a first principle in morality, depends upon the circumstances under which they were made: they may have been unlawful, or become so since, or inconsistent with former promises, or erroneous, or extorted; under all which cases, instances may be suggested, where the obligation to perform the promise would be very dubious; and so of most other general rules, when they come to be actually applied.

An argument has been also proposed on the same side of the question, of this kind. Together with the instinct, there must have been implanted, it is said, a clear and precise idea of the object upon which it was to attach. The instinct and the idea of the object are inseparable even in imagination, and as necessarily accompany each other as any correlative ideas whatever: that is, in plainer terms, if we be prompted by nature to the approbation of particular actions, we must have received also from nature a distinct conception of the action we are thus prompted to approve; which we certainly have not received.

But as this argument bears alike against all instincts, and against their existence in brutes as well as in men, it will hardly, I suppose, produce conviction, though it may be difficult to find an answer to it.

Upon the whole, it seems to me, either that there exist no such instincts as compose what is called the moral sense, or that they are not now to be distinguished from prejudices and habits; on which account they cannot be depended upon in moral reasoning: I mean, that it is not a safe way of arguing, to assume certain principles as so many dictates, impulses, and instincts of nature, and then to draw conclusions from these principles, as to the rectitude or wrongness of actions, independent of the tendency of such actions, or of any other consideration whatever.

Aristotle lays down, as a fundamental and self-evident maxim, that

nature intended barbarians to be slaves; and proceeds to deduce from this maxim a train of conclusions, calculated to justify the policy which then prevailed. And I question whether the same maxim be not still self-evident to the company of merchants trading to the coast of Africa.

Nothing is so soon made as a maxim; and it appears from the example of Aristotle, that authority and convenience, education, prejudice, and general practice, have no small share in the making of them; and that the laws of custom are very apt to be mistaken for the order of nature.

For which reason, I suspect, that a system of morality, built upon instincts, will only find out reasons and excuses for opinions and practices already established,—will seldom correct or reform either.

But farther, suppose we admit the existence of these instincts; what, it may be asked, is their authority? No man, you say, can act in deliberate opposition to them, without a secret remorse of conscience. But this remorse may be borne with; and if the sinner choose to bear with it, for the sake of the pleasure or the profit, which he expects from his wickedness; or finds the pleasure of the sin to exceed the remorse of conscience, of which he alone is the judge, and concerning which, when he feels them both together, he can hardly be mistaken, the moral-instinct man, so far as I can understand, has nothing more to offer.

For if he allege that these instincts are so many indications of the will of God, and consequently presages of what we are to look for hereafter; this, I answer, is to resort to a rule and a motive ulterior to the instincts themselves, and at which rule and motive we shall by-and-by arrive by a surer road:—I say *surer*, so long as there remains a controversy, whether there be any instinctive maxims at all; or any difficulty in ascertaining what maxims are instinctive.

This celebrated question therefore becomes in our system a question of pure curiosity; and as such, we dismiss it to the determination of those who are more inquisitive, than we are concerned to be, about the natural history and constitution of the human species.

CHAPTER VI.

Human happiness.

THE word *happy* is a relative term: that is, when we call a man happy, we mean that he is happier than some others, with whom we compare him; than the generality of others; or than he himself was in some other situation:—thus, speaking of one who has just compassed the object of a long pursuit, "Now," we say, "he is happy;" and in a like comparative sense, compared, that is, with the general lot of mankind, we call a man happy who possesses health and competency.

In sickness any condition may be denominated happy, in which

the amount or aggregate of pleasure exceeds that of pain; and the degree of happiness depends upon the quantity of this excess.

And the greatest quantity of it ordinarily attainable in human life, is what we mean by happiness, when we inquire or pronounce what human happiness consists in.*

In which inquiry I will omit much usual declamation on the dignity and capacity of our nature; the superiority of the soul to the body, of the rational to the animal part of our constitution; upon the worthiness, refinement, and delicacy, of some satisfactions, or the meanness, grossness, and sensuality, of others; because I hold that pleasures differ in nothing, but in continuance and intensity: from a just computation of which, confirmed by what we observe of the apparent cheerfulness, tranquillity, and contentment, of men of different tastes, tempers, stations, and pursuits, every question concerning human happiness must receive its decision.

It will be our business to shew, if we can,

I. What Human Happiness does not consist in:

II. What it does consist in.

First, then, Happiness does not consist in the pleasures of sense, in whatever profusion or variety they be enjoyed. By the pleasures of sense, I mean, as well the animal gratifications, of eating, drinking, and that by which the species is continued, as the more refined pleasures of music, painting, architecture, gardening, splendid shows, theatric exhibitions; and the pleasures, lastly of active sports, as of hunting, shooting, fishing, &c. For,

1st, These pleasures continue but a little while at a time. This is true of them all, especially of the grosser sort of them. Laying aside the preparation and the expectation, and computing strictly the actual sensation, we shall be surprised to find how inconsiderable a portion of our time they occupy, how few hours in the four-and-twenty they are able to fill up.

2dly, These pleasures, by repetition, lose their relish. It is a property of the machine, for which we know no remedy, that the organs

* If any *positive* signification, distinct from what we mean by pleasure, can be affixed to the term "happiness," I should take it to denote a certain state of the nervous system in that part of the human frame in which we feel joy and grief, passions and affections. Whether this part be the heart, which the turn of most languages would lead us to believe, or the diaphragm, as Buffon, or the upper orifice of the stomach, as Van Helmont thought; or rather be a kind of fine network, lining the whole region of the præcordia, as others have imagined; it is possible, not only that each painful sensation may violently shake and disturb the fibres at the time, but that a series of such may at length so derange the very texture of the system, as to produce a perpetual irritation, which will shew itself by fretfulness, impatience, and restlessness. It is possible also, on the other hand, that a succession of pleasurable sensations may have such an effect upon this subtile organization, as to cause the fibres to relax, and return into their place and order, and thereby to recover, or, if not lost, to preserve, that harmonious conformation which gives to the mind its sense of complacency and satisfaction. This state may be denominated happiness, and is so far distinguishable from pleasure, that it does not refer to any particular object of enjoyment, or consist, like pleasure, in the gratification of one or more of the senses, but is rather the secondary effect which such objects and gratifications produce upon the nervous system, or the state in which they leave it. These conjectures belong not, however, to our province. The comparative sense, in which we have explained the term Happiness, is more popular, and is sufficient for the purpose of the present chapter.

by which we perceive pleasure, are blunted and benumbed by being frequently exercised in the same way. There is hardly any one who has not found the difference between a gratification, when new, and when familiar; or any pleasure which does not become indifferent as it grows habitual.

3dly, The eagerness for high and intense delights takes away the relish from all others; and as such delights fall rarely in our way, the greater part of our time becomes, from this cause, empty and uneasy.

There is hardly any delusion by which men are greater sufferers in their happiness, than by their expecting too much from what is called pleasure; that is, from those intense delights, which vulgarly engross the name of pleasure. The very expectation spoils them. When they do come, we are often engaged in taking pains to persuade ourselves how much we are pleased, rather than enjoying any pleasure which springs naturally out of the object. And whenever we depend upon being vastly delighted, we always go home secretly grieved at missing our aim. Likewise, as has been observed just now, when this humour of being prodigiously delighted has once taken hold of the imagination, it hinders us from providing for, or acquiescing in, those gently soothing engagements, the due variety and succession of which are the only things that supply a vein or continued stream of happiness.

What I have been able to observe of that part of mankind, whose professed pursuit is pleasure, and who are withheld in the pursuit by no restraints of fortune, or scruples of conscience, corresponds sufficiently with this account. I have commonly remarked in such men, a restless and inextinguishable passion for variety; a great part of their time to be vacant, and so much of it irksome: and that with whatever eagerness and expectation they set out, they become, by degrees, fastidious in their choice of pleasures, languid in the enjoyment, yet miserable under the want of it.

The truth seems to be, that there is a limit at which these pleasures soon arrive, and from which they ever afterward decline. They are by necessity of short duration, as the organs cannot hold on their emotions beyond a certain length of time; and if you endeavour to compensate for this imperfection in their nature by the frequency with which you repeat them, you suffer more than you gain, by the fatigue of the faculties, and the diminution of sensibility.

We have said nothing, in this account, of the loss of opportunities, or the decay of faculties, which, whenever they happen, leave the voluptuary destitute and desperate; teased by desires that can never be gratified, and the memory of pleasures which must return no more.

It will also be allowed by those who have experienced it, and perhaps by those alone, that pleasure which is purchased by the encumbrance of our fortune, is purchased too dear; the pleasure never compensating for the perpetual irritation of embarrassed circumstances.

These pleasures, after all, have their value; and as the young are always too eager in their pursuit of them, the old are sometimes too remiss, that is, too studious of their ease, to be at the pains for them which they really deserve.

Secondly; Neither does happiness consist in an exemption from pain, labour, care, business, suspense, molestation, and "those evils which are without;" such a state being usually attended, not with ease, but with depression of spirits, a tastelessness in all our ideas, imaginary anxieties, and the whole train of hypochondriacal affections.

For which reason, the expectations of those who retire from their shops and counting-houses, to enjoy the remainder of their days in leisure and tranquillity, are seldom answered by the effect; much less of such, as, in a fit of chagrin, shut themselves up in cloisters and hermitages, or quit the world, and their stations in it, for solitude and repose.

Where there exists a known external cause of uneasiness, the cause may be removed, and the uneasiness will cease. But those imaginary distresses which men feel for want of real ones (and which are equally tormenting, and so far equally real,) as they depend upon no single or assignable subject of uneasiness, admit oftentimes of no application of relief.

Hence a moderate pain, upon which the attention may fasten and spend itself, is to many a refreshment: as a fit of the gout will sometimes cure the spleen. And the same of any less violent agitation of the mind, as a literary controversy, a law-suit, a contested election, and, above all, gaming; the passion for which in men of fortune and liberal minds, is only to be accounted for on this principle.

Thirdly; Neither does happiness consist in greatness, rank, or elevated station.

Were it true, that all superiority afforded pleasure, it would follow, that by how much we were greater, that is, the more persons we were superior to, in the same proportion, so far as depended upon this cause, we should be the happier; but so it is, that no superiority yields any satisfaction, save that which we possess or obtain over those with whom we immediately compare ourselves. The shepherd perceives no pleasure in his superiority over his dog; the farmer, in his superiority over the shepherd; the lord, in his superiority over the farmer; nor the king, lastly, in his superiority over the lord. Superiority, where there is no competition, is seldom contemplated; what most men are quite unconscious of.

But if the same shepherd can run, fight, or wrestle, better than the peasants of his village; if the farmer can shew better cattle, if he keep a better horse, or be supposed to have a longer purse, than any farmer in the hundred; if the lord have more interest in an election, greater favour at court, a better house, or larger estate, than any nobleman in the county; if the king possess a more extensive territory, a more powerful fleet or army, a more splendid establishment, more loyal subjects, or more weight and authority in adjusting the affairs of nations, than any prince in Europe; in all these cases, the parties feel an actual satisfaction in their superiority.

Now the conclusion that follows from hence is this; that the pleasures of ambition, which are supposed to be peculiar to high stations, are in reality common to all conditions. The farrier who shoes a horse better, and who is in greater request for his skill, than any man within ten miles of him, possesses, for all that I can see, the delight

of distinction and of excelling, as truly and substantially as the statesman, the soldier, and the scholar, who have filled Europe with the reputation of their wisdom, their valour, or their knowledge.

No superiority appears to be of any account, but superiority over a rival. This, it is manifest may exist wherever rivalships do; and rivalships fall out amongst men of all ranks and degrees. The object of emulation, the dignity or magnitude of this object, makes no difference; as it is not what either possesses that constitutes the pleasure, but what one possesses more than the other.

Philosophy smiles at the contempt with which the rich and great speak of the petty strifes and competitions of the poor; not reflecting that these strifes and competitions are just as reasonable as their own, and the pleasure which success affords, the same.

Our position is, that happiness does not consist in greatness. And this position we make out by shewing, that even what are supposed to be the peculiar advantages of greatness, the pleasures of ambition and superiority, are in reality common to all conditions. But whether the pursuits of ambition be ever wise, whether they contribute more to the happiness or misery of the pursuers, is a different question; and a question concerning which we may be allowed to entertain great doubt. The pleasure of success is exquisite; so also is the anxiety of the pursuit, and the pain of disappointment;—and what is the worst part of the account, the pleasure is short lived. We soon cease to look back upon those whom we have left behind; new contests are engaged in, new prospects unfold themselves; a succession of struggles is kept up, whilst there is a rival left within the compass of our views and profession; and when there is none, the pleasure with the pursuit is at an end.

II. We have seen what happiness does not consist in. We are next to consider in what it does consist.

In the conduct of life, the great matter is to know beforehand, what will please us, and what pleasure will hold out. So far as we know this, our choice will be justified by the event. And this knowledge is more scarce and difficult than at first sight it may seem to be: for sometimes, pleasures, which are wonderfully alluring and flattering in the prospect, turn out in the possession extremely insipid; or do not hold out as we expected: at other times, pleasures start up which never entered into our calculation; and which we might have missed of by not foreseeing: whence we have reason to believe, that we actually do miss of many pleasures from the same cause. I say, to know "beforehand;" for after the experiment is tried, it is commonly impracticable to retreat or change; beside that shifting and changing is apt to generate a habit of restlessness, which is destructive of the happiness of every condition.

By the reason of the original diversity of taste, capacity, and constitution, observable in the human species, and the still greater variety which habit and fashion have introduced in these particulars, it is impossible to propose any plan of happiness, which will suceeed to all, or any method of life which is universally eligible or practicable.

All that can be said is, that there remains a presumption in favour of those conditions of life, in which men generally appear most cheer-

ful and contented. For though the apparent happiness of mankind be not always a true measure of their real happiness, it is the best measure we have.

Taking this for my guide, I am inclined to believe that happiness consists.

I. In the exercise of the social affections.

Those persons commonly possess good spirits, who have about them many objects of affection and endearment, as wife, children, kindred, friends. And to the want of these may be imputed the peevishness of monks, and of such as lead a monastic life.

Of the same nature with the indulgence of our domestic affections, and equally refreshing to the spirits, is the pleasure which results from acts of bounty and beneficence, exercised either in giving money, or in imparting to those who want it, the assistance of our skill and profession.

Another main article of human happiness is,

II. The exercise of our faculties, either of body or mind, in the pursuit of some engaging end.

It seems to be true, that no plenitude of present gratifications can make the possessor happy for a continuance, unless he have something in reserve,—something to hope for, and look forward to. This I conclude to be the case, from comparing the alacrity and spirits of men who are engaged in any pursuit which interests them, with the dejection and *ennui* of almost all, who are either born to so much that they want nothing more, or who have *used up* their satisfactions too soon, and drained the sources of them.

It is this intolerable vacuity of mind, which carries the rich and great to the horse-course and the gaming-table; and often engages them in contests and pursuits, of which the success bears no proportion to the solicitude and expense with which it is sought. An election for a disputed borough shall cost the parties twenty or thirty thousand pounds each,—to say nothing of the anxiety, humiliation, and fatigue, of the canvas; when a seat in the house of commons, of exactly the same value, may be had for a tenth part of the money, and with no trouble. I do not mention this, to blame the rich and great (perhaps they cannot do better), but in confirmation of what I have advanced.

Hope, which thus appears to be of so much importance to our happiness, is of two kinds;—where there is something to be done towards attaining the object of our hope, and where there is nothing to be done. The first alone is of any value: the latter being apt to corrupt into impatience, having no power but to sit still and wait, which soon grows tiresome.

The doctrine delivered under this head, may be readily admitted; but how to provide ourselves with a succession of pleasurable engagements, is the difficulty. This requires two things; judgment in the choice of *ends* adapted to our opportunities; and a command of imagination, so as to be able, when the judgment has made choice of an end, to transfer a pleasure to the *means;* after which, the end may be forgotten as soon as we will.

Hence those pleasures are most valuable, not which are most ex-

quisite in the fruition, but which are most productive of engagement and activity in the pursuit.

A man who is in earnest in his endeavours after the happiness of a future state, has, in this respect, an advantage over all the world; for he has constantly before his eyes an object of supreme importance, productive of perpetual engagement and activity, and of which the pursuit (which can be said of no pursuit besides) lasts him to his life's end. Yet even he must have many ends, besides the *far end*; but then they will conduct to that, be subordinate, and in some way or other capable of being referred to that, and derive their satisfaction, or an addition of satisfaction, from that.

Engagement is every thing: the more significant, however, our engagements are, the better; such as the planning of laws, institutions, manufactures, characters, improvements, public works; and the endeavouring, by our interest, address, solicitations, and activity, to carry them into effect: or, upon a smaller scale, the procuring of a maintenance and fortune for our families by a course of industry and application to our callings, which forms and gives motions to the common occupations of life; training up a child; prosecuting a scheme for his future establishment; making ourselves masters of a language or a science; improving or managing an estate; labouring after a piece of preferment; and lastly, *any* engagement, which is innocent, is better than none; as the writing of a book, the building of a house, the laying out of a garden, the digging of a fish-pond,—even the raising of a cucumber or a tulip.

Whilst our minds are taken up with the objects or business before us, we are commonly happy, whatever the object or business be; when the mind is *absent*, and the thoughts are wandering to something else than what is passing in the place in which we are, we are often miserable.

III. Happiness depends upon the prudent constitution of the habits.

The art in which the secret of human happiness in a great measure consists, is to set the habits in such a manner, that every change may be a change for the better. The habits themselves are much the same; for whatever is made habitual, becomes smooth, and easy, and nearly indifferent. The return to an old habit is likewise easy, whatever the habit be. Therefore the advantage is with those habits which allow of no indulgence in the deviation from them. The luxurious receive no greater pleasure from their dainties, than the peasant does from his bread and cheese; but the peasant, whenever he goes abroad, finds a feast; whereas the epicure must be well entertained to escape disgust. Those who spend every day at cards, and those who go every day to plough, pass their time much alike: intent upon what they are about, wanting nothing, regretting nothing, they are both for the time in a state of ease; but then, whatever suspends the occupation of the card-player, distresses him; whereas to the labourer every interruption is a refreshment: and this appears in the different effects that Sunday produces upon the two, which proves a day of recreation to the one, but a lamentable burden to the other. The man who has learned to live alone, feels his spirits enlivened when he enters into company, and takes his leave without regret; ano-

ther, who has long been accustomed to a crowd, or continual succession of company, experiences in company no elevation of spirits, nor any greater satisfaction, than what the man of a retired life finds in his chimney-corner. So far their conditions are equal; but let a change of place, fortune, or situation, separate the companion from his circle, his visitors, his club, common-room, or coffee-house; and the difference and advantage in the choice and constitution of the two habits will shew itself. Solitude comes to the one, clothed with melancholy; to the other it brings liberty and quiet. You will see the one fretful and restless, at a loss how to dispose of his time, till the hour come round when he may forget himself in bed; the other easy and satisfied, taking up his book or his pipe, as soon as he finds himself alone; ready to admit any little amusement that casts up, or to turn his hands and attention to the first business that presents itself; or content, without either, to sit still, and let his train of thought glide indolently through his brain, without much use, perhaps, or pleasure, but without *hankering* after any thing better, and without irritation.—A reader who has inured himself to books of science and argumentation,, if a novel, a well-written pamphlet, an article of news, a narrative of a curious voyage, or a journal of a traveller, fall in his way, sits down to the repast with relish; enjoys his entertainment while it lasts, and can return, when it is over, to his graver reading, without distaste. Another, with whom nothing will go down but works of humour and pleasantry, or whose curiosity must be interested by perpetual novelty, will consume a bookseller's window in half a forenoon: during which time he is rather in search of diversion than diverted; and as books to his taste are few, and short, and rapidly read over, the stock is soon exhausted, when he is left without resourse from this principal supply of harmless amusement.

So far as circumstances of fortune conduce to happiness, it is not the income which any man possesses, but the increase of income, that affords the pleasure. Two persons, of whom one begins with a hundred and advances his income to a thousand pounds a year, and the other sets off with a thousand, and dwindles down to a hundred, may, in the course of their time, have the receipt and spending of the same sum of money; yet their satisfaction, so far as fortune is concerned in it, will be very different; the series and sum total of their incomes being the same, it makes a wide difference at which end they begin.

IV. Happiness consists in health.

By health I understand, as well freedom from bodily distempers, as that tranquillity, firmness and alacrity of mind, which we call good spirits; and which may properly enough be included in our notion of health, as depending commonly upon the same causes, and yielding to the same management, as our bodily constitution.

Health, in this sense, is the one thing needful. Therefore no pains, expense, self-denial, or restraint, to which we subject ourselves for the sake of health, is too much. Whether it require us to relinquish lucrative situations, to abstain from favourite indulgences, to control intemperate passions, or undergo tedious regimens; whatever difficulties it lays us under, a man, who pursues his happiness rationally and resolutely, will be content to submit.

When we are in perfect health and spirits, we feel in ourselves a happiness independent of any particular outward gratification whatever, and of which we can give no account. This is an enjoyment which the Deity has annexed to life; and it probably constitutes, in a great measure, the happiness of infants and brutes, especially of the lower and sedentary orders of animals, as of oysters, periwinkles, and the like; for which I have sometimes been at a loss to find out amusement.

The above account of human happiness will justify the two following conclusions, which, although found in most books of morality, have seldom, I think, been supported by any sufficient reasons:—

FIRST, That happiness is pretty equally distributed amongst the different orders of civil society:

SECONDLY, That vice has no advantage over virtue, even with respect to this world's happiness.

CHAPTER VII.

Virtue.

VIRTUE is "*the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.*"

According to which definition, "the good of mankind" is the subject; the "will of God," the rule; and "everlasting happiness," the motive of human virtue.

Virtue has been divided by some moralists into *benevolence, prudence, fortitude,* and *temperance. Benevolence* proposes good ends; *prudence* suggests the best means of attaining them; *fortitude* enables us to encounter the difficulties, dangers, and discouragements, which stand in our way in the pursuit of these ends; *temperance* repels and overcomes the passions that obstruct it. *Benevolence,* for instance, prompts us to undertake the cause of an oppressed orphan; *prudence* suggests the best means of going about it; *fortitude* enables us to confront the danger, and bear up against the loss, disgrace, or repulse, that may attend our undertaking; and *temperance* keeps under the love of money, of ease, or amusement, which might divert us from it.

Virtue is distinguished by others into two branches only, *prudence* and *benevolence: prudence,* attentive to our own interest; *benevolence* to that of our fellow-creatures: both directed to the same end, the increase of happiness in nature; and taking equal concern in the future as in the present.

The four CARDINAL virtues are, *prudence, fortitude, temperance,* and *justice.*

But the division of virtue, to which we are in modern times most accustomed, is into duties;

Towards *God;* as piety, reverence, resignation, gratitude, &c.

Towards *other men* (or relative duties); as justice, charity, fidelity, loyalty, &c.

Towards *ourselves;* as chastity, sobriety, temperance, preservation [illegible], care of health, &c.

More of these distinctions have been proposed, which it is not worth while to set down.

I shall proceed to state a few observations, which relate to the general regulation of human conduct; unconnected indeed with each other, but very worthy of attention; and which fall as properly under the title of this chapter as of any future one.

1. Mankind act more from habit than reflection.

It is on few only and great occasions that men deliberate at all; on fewer still, that they institute any thing like a regular inquiry into the moral rectitude or depravity of what they are about to do; or wait for the result of it. We are for the most part determined at once; and by an impulse, which is the effect and energy of pre-established habits. And this constitution seems well adapted to the exigencies of human life, and to the imbecility of our moral principle. In the current occasions and rapid opportunities of life, there is oftentimes little leisure for reflection; and were there more, a man, who has to reason about his duty, when the temptation to transgress it is upon him, is almost sure to reason himself into an error.

If we are in so great a degree passive under our habits, Where, it is asked, is the exercise of virtue, the guilt of vice, or any use of moral and religious knowledge? I answer, In the *forming and contracting* of these habits.

And hence results a rule of life of considerable importance, *viz.* that many things are to be done and abstained from, solely for the sake of habit. We will explain ourselves by an example or two.—A beggar, with the appearance of extreme distress, asks our charity. If we come to argue the matter, whether the distress be real, whether it be not brought upon himself, whether it be of public advantage to admit such application, whether it be not to encourage idleness and vagrancy, whether it may not invite impostors to our doors, whether the money can be well spared, or might not be better applied; when these considerations are put together, it may appear very doubtful, whether we ought or ought not to give any thing. But when we reflect, that the misery before our eyes excites our pity, whether we will or not; that it is of the utmost consequence to us to cultivate this tenderness of mind; that it is a quality, cherished by indulgence, and soon stifled by opposition; when this, I say, is considered, a wise man will do that, for his own sake, which he would have hesitated to do for the petitioner's; he will give way to his compassion, rather than offer violence to a habit of so much general use.

A man of confirmed good habits, will act in the same manner without any consideration at all.

This may serve for one instance; another is the following.—A man has been brought up from his infancy with a dread of lying. An occasion presents itself where, at the expense of a little veracity, he may divert his company, set off his own wit with advantage, attract the notice and engage the partiality of all about him. This is not a small temptation. And when he looks at the other side of the question, he sees no mischief, that can ensue from this liberty, no

slander of any man's reputation, no prejudice likely to arise to any man's interest. Were there nothing farther to be considered, it would be difficult to shew why a man under such circumstances might not indulge his humour. But when he reflects that his scruples about lying have hitherto preserved him free from this vice; that occasions like the present will return, where the inducement may be equally strong, but the indulgence much less innocent; that his scruples will wear away by a few transgressions, and leave him subject to one of the meanest and most pernicious of all bad habits,—a habit of lying, whenever it will serve his turn: when all this, I say, is considered, a wise man will forego the present, or a much greater pleasure, rather than lay the foundation of a character so vicious and contemptible.

From what has been said, may be explained also the nature of *habitual* virtue. By the definition of virtue, placed at the beginning of this chapter, it appears, that the good of mankind is the subject, the will of God the rule, and everlasting happiness the motive and end, of all virtue. Yet, in fact, a man shall perform many an act of virtue, without having either the good of mankind, the will of God, or everlasting happiness, in his thought. How is this to be understood? In the same manner as that a man may be a very good servant, without being conscious, at every turn, of a particular regard to his master's will, or of an express attention to his master's interest; indeed your best old servants are of this sort: but then he must have served for a length of time under the actual direction of these motives, to bring it to this: in which service his merit and virtue consist.

There are *habits*, not only of drinking, swearing, and lying, and of some other things, which are commonly acknowledged to be habits, and called so; but of every modification of action, speech and thought, Man is a bundle of habits.

There are habits of industry, attention, vigilance, advertency; of a prompt obedience to the judgment occurring, or of yielding to the first impulse of passion; of extending our views to the future, or of resting upon the present; of apprehending, methodizing, reasoning; of indolence and dilatoriness; of vanity, self-conceit, melancholy, partiality; of fretfulness, suspicion, captiousness, censoriousness; of pride, ambition, covetousness; of overreaching, intriguing, projecting; in a word, there is not a quality or function, either of body or mind, which does not feel the influence of this great law of animated nature.

II. The Christian Religion hath not ascertained the precise quantity of virtue necessary to salvation.

This has been made an objection to Christianity; but without reason. For, as all revelation, however imparted originally, must be transmitted by the ordinary vehicle of language, it behoves those who make the objection, to shew that any form of words, could be devised, that might express this *quantity;* or that it is possible, to constitute a standard of moral attainments, accommodated to the almost infinite diversity which subsists in the capacities, and opportunities of different men.

It seems most agreeable to our conceptions of justice, and is con-

sonant enough to the language of Scripture,* to suppose, that there are prepared for us rewards and punishments, of all possible degrees, from the most exalted happiness down to extreme misery; so that "our labour is never in vain;" whatever advancement we make in virtue, we procure a proportionable accession of future happiness; as, on the other hand, every accumulation of vice is the "treasuring up so much wrath against the day of wrath." It has been said, that it can never be a just economy of Providence, to admit one part of mankind into heaven, and condemn the other to hell; since there must be very little to choose, between the worst man who is received into heaven, and the best who is excluded. And how know we, it might be answered, but that there may be as little to choose in the conditions.

Without entering into a detail of Scripture morality, which would anticipate our subject, the following general positions may be advanced I think, with safety.

1. That a state of happiness is not to be expected by those who are conscious of no moral or religious rule: I mean those who cannot with truth say, that they have been prompted to one action, or withholden from one gratification, by any regard to virtue or religion, either immediate or habitual.

There needs no other proof of this, than the consideration, that a brute would be as proper an object of reward as such a man, and that, if the case were so, the penal sanctions of religion could have no place. For, whom would you punish, if you make such a one as this happy?—or rather indeed religion itself, both natural and revealed, would cease to have either use or authority.

2. That a state of happiness is not to be expected by those, who reserve to themselves the habitual practice of any one sin, or neglect of one known duty.

Because, no obedience can proceed upon proper motives, which is not universal, that is, which is not directed to every command of God alike, as they all stand upon the same authority.

Because such an allowance would in effect amount to a toleration of every vice in the world.

And because the strain of Scripture language excludes any such hope. When our *duties* are recited, they are put *collectively*, that is, as all and every of them required in the Christian character. "*Add* to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity."† On the other hand, when *vices* are enumerated, they are put *dis-*

* "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." 2 Cor. ix. 6.—"And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes, but he that knew not, shall be beaten with few stripes." Luke xii. 47, 48.—"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ; verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward;" to wit, intimating that there is in reserve a proportionable reward for even the smallest act of virtue. Mark ix. 41.—See also the parable of the pounds, Luke xix. 16. &c.; where he whose pound had gained ten pounds, was placed over ten cities and he whose pound had gained five pounds, was placed over five cities.

† 2 Pet. i. 5—7.

junctively, that is, as separately and severally excluding the sinner from heaven. "*Neither* fornicators nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of heaven"*

Those texts of Scripture, which seem to lean a contrary way, as that "charity shall cover a multitude of sins;"† that "he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall hide a multitude of sins;‡ cannot, I think, for the reasons above mentioned, be extended to sins deliberately, habitually, and obstinately, persisted in.

3. That a state of mere unprofitableness will not go unpunished.

This is expressly laid down by Christ, in the parable of the talents, which supersedes all farther reasoning upon the subject. "Then he which had received one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an austere man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and *slothful* servant, thou knewest (or, knewest thou?) that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents; for unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath; *and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*§

III. In every question of conduct, where one side is doubtful, and the other side safe; we are bound to take the safe side.

This is best explained by an instance; and I know of none more to our purpose than that of suicide. Suppose, for example's sake, that it appear doubtful to a reasoner upon the subject, whether he may lawfully destroy himself. He can have no doubt, that it is lawful for him to let it alone. Here therefore is a case, in which one side is doubtful and the other side safe. By virtue therefore of our rule, he is bound to pursue the safe side, that is, to forbear from offering violence to himself whilst a doubt remains upon his mind concerning the lawfulness of suicide.

It is *prudent*, you allow, to take the safe side. But our observation means something more. We assert that the action concerning which we doubt, whatever it may be in itself, or to another, would in *us*, whilst this doubt remains upon our minds, be certainly sinful. The case is expressly so adjudged by St. Paul, with whose authority we will for the present rest contented.—"I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but *to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*—Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth; and he that doubteth, is damned (*condemned*) if he eat, for whatsoever is not of faith (*i. e.* not done with a full persuasion of the lawfulness of it) is sin."‖

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. † 1 Pet. iv. 8. ‡ James v. 20.
§ Matt. xxv. 24, &c. ‖ Rom. xiv. 14, 22, 23.

BOOK II.

MORAL OBLIGATION.

CHAPTER I.

The question, Why am I obliged to keep my word? *considered.*

WHY am I obliged to keep my word?

Because it is right, says one.—Because it is agreeable to the fitness of things, says another.—Because it is conformable to reason and nature, says a third.—Because it is conformable to truth, says a fourth.—Because it promotes the public good, says a fifth.—Because it is required by the will of God, concludes a sixth.

Upon which different accounts, two things are observable:—

FIRST, that they all ultimately coincide.

The fitness of things, means their fitness to produce happiness: the nature of things, means that actual constitution of the world, by which some things, as such and such actions, for example, produce happiness, and others misery; reason is the principle, by which we discover or judge of this constitution; truth, is this judgment expressed or drawn out into propositions. So that it necessarily comes to pass, that what promotes the public happiness, or happiness on the whole, is agreeable to the fitness of things, to nature, to reason, and to truth: and such (as will appear by and by) is the divine character, that what promotes the general happiness, is required by the will of God; and what has all the above properties, must needs be *right*; for, right means no more than conformity to the rule we go by, whatever that rule be.

And this is the reason that moralists, from whatever different principles they set out, commonly meet in their conclusions; that is, they enjoin the same conduct, prescribe the same rules of duty, and, with a few exceptions, deliver upon dubious cases the same determinations.

SECONDLY, it is to be observed, that these answers all leave the matter *short*; for, the inquirer may turn round upon his teacher with a second question, in which, he will expect to be satisfied, namely, *Why* am I obliged to do what is right; to act agreeably to the fitness of things; to conform to reason, nature, or truth; to promote the public good, or to obey the will of God?

The proper method of conducting the inquiry is, FIRST, to examine what we mean, when we say a man is *obliged* to do any thing; and THEN to shew *why* he is obliged to do the thing which we have proposed as an example, namely, "to keep his word."

CHAPTER II.

What we mean, when we say a man, is obliged *to do a thing.*

A MAN is said to be *obliged*, "*when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another.*"

FIRST, "The motive must be violent." If a person who has done me some little service, or has a small place in his disposal, ask me upon some occasion for my vote, I may possibly give it him, from a motive of gratitude or expectation: but I should hardly say that I was *obliged* to give it him, because the inducement does not rise high enough. Whereas if a father, or a master, any great benefactor, or one on whom my fortune depends, require my vote, I give it him of course: and my answer to all who ask me why I voted so, and so, is, that my father or my master *obliged* me; that I had received so many favours from, or had so great a dependance upon such a one, that I was *obliged* to vote as he directed me.

SECONDLY, "It must result from the command of another." Offer a man a gratuity for doing any thing, for seizing, for example, an offender, he is not *obliged* by your offer to do it: nor would he say he is; though he may be *induced, persuaded, prevailed upon, tempted.* If a magistrate or the man's immediate superior command it, he considers himself as *obliged* to comply, though possibly he would lose less by a refusal in this case, than in the former.

I will not undertake to say that the words *obligation* and *obliged* are used uniformly in this sense, or always with this distinction; nor is it possible to tie down popular phrases to any constant signification: but wherever the motive is violent enough, and coupled with the idea of command, authority, law, or the will of a superior, there, I take it, we always reckon ourselves to be *obliged.*

And from this account of obligation it follows, that we can be obliged to nothing, but what we ourselves are to gain or lose something by; for nothing else can be a "violent motive" to us. As we should not be obliged to obey the laws, or the magistrate, unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, somehow or other, depended upon our obedience; so neither should we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is right, to practise virtue, or to obey the commands of God.

CHAPTER III.

The question, Why am I obliged to keep my word. *resumed.*

LET it be remembered, that to be *obliged*, is "to be urged by a violent motive, resulting from the command of another."

And then let it be asked, Why am I *obliged* to keep my word? and the answer will be, Because I am "urged to do so by a violent motive (namely, the expectation of being after this life rewarded, if I do, or punished for it, if I do not), resulting from the command of another, (namely, of God).

This solution goes to the bottom of the subject, as no farther question can reasonably be asked.

Therefore, private happiness is our motive, and the will of God our rule.

When I first turned my thoughts to moral speculations, an air of mystery seemed to hang over the whole subject; which arose, I believe, from hence,—that I supposed, with many authors whom I had read, that to be *obliged* to do a thing, was very different from being *induced* only to do it; and that the obligation to practise virtue, to do what is right, just, &c. was quite another thing, and of another kind, than the obligation which a soldier is under to obey his officer, a servant his master; or any of the civil and ordinary obligations of human life. Whereas, from what has been said it appears, that moral obligation is like all other obligations; and that *obligation* is nothing more than an *inducement* of sufficient strength, and resulting in some way, from the command of another.

There is always understood to be a difference between an act of *prudence* and an act of *duty*. Thus, if I distrusted a man who owed me a sum of money, I should reckon it an act of prudence to get another person bound with him; but I should hardly call it an act of *duty*. On the other hand, it would be thought a very unusual and loose kind of language, to say, that, as I had made such a promise, it was *prudent* to perform it; or that, as my friend, when he went abroad, placed a box of jewels in my hands, it would be *prudent* in me to preserve it for him till he returned.

Now, in what, you will ask, does the difference consist, inasmuch as, according to our account of the matter, both in the one case and the other, in acts of duty as well as acts of prudence, we consider solely what we ourselves shall gain or lose by the act.

The difference, and the only difference, is this; that in the one case, we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present world; in the other case, we consider also what we shall gain or lose in the world to come.

They who would establish a system of morality, independent of a future state, must look out for some different idea of moral obligation; unless they can shew that virtue conducts the possessor to certain happiness in this life, or to a much greater share of it than he could attain by a different behaviour.

To us there are two great questions:

I. Will there be after this life any distribution of rewards and punishments at all.

II. If there be, what actions will be rewarded, and what will be punished?

The first question comprises the credibility of the Christian religion, together with the presumptive proofs of a future retribution from the light of nature. The second question comprises the province of morality. Both questions are too much for one work. The affirmative therefore of the first, although we confess that it is the foundation upon which the whole fabric rests, must in this treatise be taken for granted.

CHAPTER IV.

The will of God.

AS the will of God is our rule; to enquire what is our duty, or what we are obliged to do, in any instance, is, in effect, to inquire what is the will of God in that instance? which consequently becomes the whole business of morality.

Now there are two methods of coming at the will of God on any point:

I. By his express declarations, when they are to be had, and which must be sought for in Scripture.

II. By what we can discover of his designs and disposition from his works: or, as we usually call it, the light of nature.

And here we may observe the absurdity of separating natural and revealed religion from each other. The object of both is the same—to discover the will of God,—and provided we do but discover it, it matters nothing by what means.

An ambassador, judging by what he knows of his sovereign's disposition, and arguing from what he has observed of his conduct, or is acquainted with of his designs, may take his measures in many cases with safety, and presume with great probability how his master would have him act on most occasions that arise: but if we have his commission and instructions in his pocket, it would be strange not to look into them. He will be directed by both rules: when his instructions are clear and positive, there is an end to all farther deliberation (unless indeed he suspect their authenticity): where his instructions are silent or dubious, he will endeavour to supply or explain them, by what he has been able to collect from other quarters of his master's general inclination or intentions.

Mr. Hume, in his fourth Appendix to his Principles of Morals, has been pleased to complain of the modern scheme of uniting Ethics with the Christian Theology. They who find themselves disposed to

join in this complaint, will do well to observe what Mr. Hume himself has been able to make of morality without this union. And for that purpose, let them read the second part of the ninth section of the above essay; which part contains the practical application of the whole treatise,—a treatise, which Mr. Hume declares to be "incomparably the best he ever wrote." When they have read it over, let them consider, whether any motives there proposed are likely to be found sufficient to withhold men from the gratification of lust, revenge, envy, ambition, avarice; or to prevent the existence of these passions. Unless they rise up from this celebrated essay with stronger impressions upon their minds than it ever left upon mine, they will acknowledge the necessity of additional sanctions. But the necessity of these sanctions is not now the question. If they be *in fact established*, if the rewards and punishments held forth in the Gospel will actually come to pass, they *must* be considered. Such as reject the Christian religion, are to make the best shift they can to build up a system, and lay the foundation of morality, without it. But it appears to me a great inconsistency in those who receive Christianity, and expect something to come of it, to endeavour to keep all such expectations out of sight in their reasonings concerning human duty.

The method of coming at the will of God, concerning any action by the light of nature, is to inquire into "the tendency of the action to promote or diminish the general happiness." This rule proceeds upon the presumption, that God Almighty wills and wishes the happiness of his creatures; and, consequently, that those actions which promote that will and wish, must be agreeable to him; and the contrary.

As this presumption is the foundation of our whole system, it becomes necessary to explain the reasons upon which it rests.

CHAPTER V.

The Divine Benevolence.

WHEN God created the human species, either he wished their happiness, or he wished their misery, or he was indifferent and unconcerned about both.

If he had wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of gratification and enjoyment: or by placing us amidst objects so ill-suited to our perceptions, as to have continually offended us, instead of ministering to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for example, every thing we tasted, bitter; every thing we saw loathsome; every thing we touched, a sting; every smell a stench; and every sound a discord.

If he had been indifferent about our happiness or misery, we must impute to our good fortune (as all design by this supposition is ex-

cluded) both the capacity of our senses to receive pleasure, and the supply of external objects fitted to produce it. But either of these (and still more both of them) being too much to be attributed to accident, nothing remains but the first supposition, that God, when he created the human species, wished their happiness; and made for them the provision which he has made, with that view, and for that purpose.

The same argument may be proposed in different terms, thus: Contrivance proves design; and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. The world abounds with contrivances; and all the contrivances which we are acquainted with, are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil, no doubt, exists; but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache; their aching now and then, is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it: or even, if you will, let it be called a defect in the contrivance; but it is not the *object* of it. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, you would hardly say of the sickle, that it is made to cut the reaper's fingers, though, from the construction of the instrument, and the manner of using it, this mischief often happens. But if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution, This engine, you would say, is to extend the sinews: this to dislocate the joints; this to break the bones; this to scorch the soles of the feet. Here, pain and misery are the very *objects* of the contrivance. Now, nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature, we never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease: or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, This is to irritate; this to inflame; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys; this gland to secrete the humour which forms the gout: if by chance he come at a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say is, that it is useless: no one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment. Since then God hath called forth his consummate wisdom to contrive and provide for our happiness, and the world appears to have been constituted with this design at first; so long as this constitution is upholden by him, we must in reason suppose the same design to continue.

The contemplation of universal nature rather bewilders the mind than affects it. There is always a bright spot in the prospect, upon which the eye rests: a single example, perhaps, by which each man finds himself more *convinced* than by all others put together. I seem for my own part, to see the benevolence of the Deity more clearly in the pleasures of very young children, than in any thing in the world. The pleasures of grown persons may be reckoned partly of their own procuring; especially if there has been any industry, or contrivance, or pursuit, to come at them; or if they are founded, like music, painting, &c. upon any qualification of their own acquiring. But the pleasures of a healthy infant are so manifestly provided for it by *another*, and the benevolence of the provision is so unquestionable, that every child I see at its sport, affords to my mind a kind of sensible evidence of the finger of God, and of the disposition which directs

But the example, which strikes each man most strongly, is the true example for him; and hardly two minds hit upon the same; which shews the abundance of such examples about us.

We conclude, therefore, that God wills and wishes the happiness of his creatures. And this conclusion being once established, we are at liberty to go on with the rule built upon it, namely, "that the method of coming at the will of God, concerning any action, by the light of nature, is to inquire into the tendency of that action to promote or diminish the general happiness."

CHAPTER VI.

Utility

SO then actions are to be estimated by their tendency.* Whatever is expedient, is right. It is the utility of any moral rule alone, which constitutes the obligation of it.

But to all this there seems a plain objection, *viz.* that many actions are useful, which no man in his senses will allow to be right. There are occasions, in which the hand of the assassin would be very useful. The present possessor of some great estate employs his influence and fortune, to annoy, corrupt, or oppress, all about him. His estate would devolve, by his death, to a successor of an opposite character. It is useful, therefore, to despatch such a one as soon as possible out of the way; as the neighbourhood will exchange thereby a pernicious tyrant for a wise and generous benefactor. It might be useful to rob a miser, and give the money to the poor; as the money, no doubt, would produce more happiness, by being laid out in food and clothing for half a dozen distressed families, than by continuing locked up in a miser's chest. It may be useful to get possession of a place, a piece of preferment, or of a seat in Parliament, by bribery or false-swearing: as by means of them we may serve the public more effectually than in our private station. What then shall we say? Must we admit these actions to be right, which would be to justify assassination, plunder, and perjury; or must we give up our principle, that the criterion of right is utility.

It is not necessary to do either.

The true answer is this; that these actions, after all, are not useful, and for that reason, and that alone, are not right.

To see this point perfectly, it must be observed that the bad consequences of actions are twofold, *particular* and *general*.

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* Actions in the abstract are right or wrong, according to their *tendency*; the agent is virtuous or vicious, according to his *design*. Thus, if the question be, Whether relieving common beggars be right or wrong? we inquire into the *tendency* of such a conduct to the public advantage or inconvenience. If the question be, Whether a man, remarkable for this sort of bounty, is to be esteemed virtuous for that reason? we inquire into his *design*, whether his liberality sprang from charity or from ostentation? It is evident that our concern is with actions in the abstract.

The particular bad consequence of an action is the mischief which that single action directly and immediately occasions.

The general bad consequence is, the violation of some necessary or useful *general* rule.

Thus, the particular bad consequence of the assassination above described, is the fright and pain which the deceased underwent; the loss he suffered of life, which is as valuable to a bad man, as to a good one, or more so; the prejudice and affliction, of which his death was the occasion, to his family, friends, and dependants.

The general bad consequence is the violation of this necessary general rule, that no man be put to death for his crimes but by public authority.

Although, therefore, such an action have no particular bad consequences, or greater particular good consequences, yet it is not useful, by reason of the general consequence, which is of more importance, and which is evil. And the same of the other two instances, and of a million more which might be mentioned.

But as this solution supposes, that the moral government of the world must proceed by general rules, it remains that we shew the necessity of this.

CHAPTER VII.

The necessity of general rules.

YOU cannot permit one action and forbid another, without shewing a difference between them. Consequently the same sort of actions must be generally permitted or generally forbidden. Where, therefore the general permission of them would be pernicious, it becomes necessary to lay down and support the rule which generally forbids them.

Thus, to return once more to the case of the assassin. The assassin knocked the rich villain on the head, because he thought him better out of the way than in it. If you allow this excuse in the present instance, you must allow it to all who act in the same manner, and from the same motive; that is, you must allow every man to kill any one he meets, whom he thinks noxious or useless; which, in the event, would be to commit every man's life and safety to the spleen, fury, and fanaticism, of his neighbour;—a disposition of affairs which would soon fill the world with misery and confusion; and ere long put an end to human society, if not to the human species.

The necessity of general rules in human government is apparent; but whether the same necessity subsist in the Divine economy, in that distribution of rewards and punishments to which a moralist looks forward, may be doubted.

I answer, that general rules are necessary to every moral government: and by moral government I mean any dispensation whose *object is to* influence the conduct of reasonable creatures.

For if, of two actions perfectly similar, one be punished, and the other be rewarded or forgiven, which is the consequence of rejecting general rules, the subjects of such a dispensation would no longer know, either what to expect or how to act. Rewards and punishments would cease to be such,—would become accidents. Like the stroke of a thunderbolt, or the discovery of a mine, like a blank or a benefit ticket in a lottery, they would occasion pain or pleasure when they happen; but, following in no known order, from any particular course of action, they could have no previous influence or effect upon the conduct.

An attention to general rules, therefore, is included in the very idea of reward and punishment. Consequently, whatever reason there is to expect future reward and punishment at the hand of God, there is the same reason to believe, that he will proceed in the distribution of it by general rules.

Before we prosecute the consideration of general consequences any farther, it may be proper to anticipate a reflection, which will be apt enough to suggest itself, in the progress of our argument.

As the general consequence of an action, upon which so much of the guilt of a bad action depends, consists in the *example:* it should seem, that if the action be done with perfect secrecy, so as to furnish no bad example, that part of the guilt drops off. In the case of suicide, for instance, if a man can so manage matters, as to take away his own life, without being known or suspected to have done so, he is not chargeable with any mischief from the example; nor does his punishment seem necessary, in order to save the authority of any general rule.

In the first place, those who reason in this manner do not observe, that they are setting up a general rule of all others the least to be endured, namely, that secrecy, whenever secrecy is practicable, will justify any action.

Were such a rule admitted, for instance in the case above produced; is there not reason to fear that people would be *disappearing* perpetually.

In the next place, I would wish them to be well satisfied about the points proposed in the following queries.

1. Whether the Scriptures do not teach us to expect, that, at the general judgment of the world, the most secret actions will be brought to light.*"

2. For what purpose can this be, but to make them the objects of reward and punishment.

3. Whether, being so brought to light, they will not fall under the

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* "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." Rom. xi. 16.—'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart." 1. Cor. iv. 5.

operation of those equal and impartial rules, by which God will deal with his creatures?

They will then become examples, whatever they be now; and require the same treatment from the judge and governor of the moral world, as if they had been detected from the first.

CHAPTER VIII.

The consideration of general consequences pursued.

THE general consequence of any action may be estimated, by asking what would be the consequence, if the same sort of actions were generally permitted. But suppose they were, and a thousand such actions perpetrated under this permission; is it just to charge a single action with the collected guilt and mischief of the whole thousand? I answer, that the reason for prohibiting and punishing an action (and this reason may be called the *guilt* of the action, if you please) will always be in proportion to the whole mischief that would arise from the general impunity and toleration of actions of the same sort.

"Whatever is expedient, is right." But then it must be expedient on the whole, at the long run, in all its effects collateral and remote, as well as in those which are immediate and direct; as it is obvious, that, in computing consequences, it makes no difference in what way or at what distance they ensue.

To impress this doctrine on the minds of young readers, and to teach them to extend their views beyond the immediate mischief of a crime, I shall here subjoin a string of instances, in which the particular consequence is comparatively insignificant; and where the malignity of the crime, and the severity with which human laws pursue it, is almost entirely founded upon the general consequence.

The particular consequence of coining is, the loss of a guinea, or of half a guinea, to the person who receives the counterfeit money: the general consequence (by which I mean the consequence that would ensue, if the same practice were generally permitted) is, to abolish the use of money.

The particular consequence of forgery is, a damage of twenty or thirty pounds to the man who accepts the forged bill; the general consequence is, the stoppage of paper currency.

The particular consequence of sheep-stealing, or horse-stealing, is a loss to the owner to the amount of the value of the sheep or horse stolen: the general consequence is, that the land could not be occupied, nor the market supplied with this kind of stock.

The particular consequence of breaking into a house empty of inhabitants, is, the loss of a pair of silver candlesticks, or a few spoons: the general consequence is, that nobody could leave their house empty.

The particular consequence of smuggling may be a deduction from the national fund too minute for computation: the general consequence is, the destruction of one entire branch of public revenue; a *proportionable* increase of the burden upon other branches; and the ruin of all fair and open trade in the article smuggled.

The particular consequence of an officer's breaking his parole is, the loss of a prisoner, who was possibly not worth keeping: the general consequence is, that this mitigation of captivity would be refused to all others.

And what proves incontestably the superior importance of general consequence is, that crimes are the same, and treated in the same manner, though the particular consequence be very different. The crime and fate of the house-breaker is the same, whether his booty be five pounds or fifty. And the reason is, that the general consequence is the same.

The want of this distinction between particular and general consequences, or rather, the not sufficiently attending to the latter, is the cause of that perplexity which we meet with in ancient moralists. On the one hand, they were sensible of the absurdity of pronouncing actions good or evil, without regard to the good or evil they produced. On the other hand, they were startled at the conclusions to which a steady adherence to consequences seemed sometimes to conduct them. To relieve this difficulty they contrived the τὸ πρεπον, or the *honestum*, by which terms they meant to constitute a measure of right, distinct from utility. Whilst the *utile* served them, that is, whilst it corresponded with their habitual notions of the rectitude of actions, they went by *it*. When they fell in with such cases as those mentioned in the sixth chapter, they took leave of their guide, and resorted to the *honestum*. The only account they could give of the matter was, that these actions might be useful; but, because they were not at the same time *honesta*, they were by no means to be deemed just or right.

From the principles delivered in this and the two preceding chapter's a maxim may be explained, which is in every man's mouth, and in most men's without meaning, *viz.* "not to do evil, that good may come;" that is, let us not violate a general rule, for the sake of any particular good consequence we may expect: which is for the most part a salutary caution, the advantage seldom compensating for the violation of the rule. Strictly speaking that cannot be "evil," from which "good comes;" but in this way, and with a view to the distinction between particular and general consequences it may.

We will conclude this subject of *consequences* with the following reflection. A man may imagine, that any action of his with respect to the public, must be inconsiderable; so also is the agent. If his crime produce but a small effect upon the *universal* interest, his punishment or destruction bears a small proportion to the sum of happiness and misery in the creation.

CHAPTER IX.

Of right.

RIGHT and obligation are reciprocal; that is, wherever there is a right in one person, there is a corresponding obligation upon others. If one man has a "right" to an estate; others are "obliged"

to abstain from it.—If parents have a "right" to reverence from their children; children are "obliged" to reverence their parents;—and so in all other instances.

Now, because moral *obligation* depends, as we have seen, upon the will of God; *right* which is correlative to it, must depend upon the same. Right therefore signifies, *consistency with the will of God.*

But if the Divine will determine the distinction of right and wrong, what else is it but an identical proposition, to say of God, that he *acts right?* or how is it possible to conceive even that he should act *wrong?* Yet these assertions are intelligible and significant. The case is this: By virtue of the two principles, that God wills the happiness of his creatures, and that the will of God is the measure of right and wrong, we arrive at certain conclusions; which conclusions become rules; and we soon learn to pronounce actions right or wrong, according as they agree or disagree with our rules, without looking any farther: and when the habit is once established of stopping at the rules, we can go back and compare with these rules even the Divine conduct itself; and yet it may be true (only not observed by us at the time) that the rules themselves are deduced from the Divine will.

Right is a quality of persons or of actions.

Of persons, as when we say, such a one has a "right" to this estate; parents have a "right" to reverence from their children; the king to allegiance from his subjects; masters have a "right" to their servant's labour; a man has not a "right" over his own life.

Of actions: as in such expressions as the following: it is "right" to punish murder with death; his behaviour on that occasion was "right;" it is not "right" to send an unfortunate debtor to jail; he did or acted right," who gave up his place, rather than vote against his judgment.

In this latter set of expressions, you may substitute the definition of right above given, for the term itself: *e. g.* it is "consistent with the will of God" to punish murder with death;—his behaviour on that occasion was "consistent with the will of God;"—it is not "consistent with the will of God." to send an unfortunate debtor to jail;—he did, or acted, "consistently with the will of God," who gave up his place rather than vote against his judgment.

In the former set, you must vary the construction a little, when you introduce the definition instead of the term. Such a one has a right" to this estate, that is, it is "consistent with the will of God" that such a one should have it; parents have a "right" to reverence from their children, that is it is "consistent with the will of God" that children should reverence their parents;—and the same of the rest.

CHAPTER X.

The division of rights

RIGHTS, when applied to persons, are
Natural or adventitious:
Alienable or inalienable:
Perfect or imperfect.

1. Rights are natural or adventitious.

Natural rights are such as would belong to a man, although there subsisted in the world no civil government whatever

Adventitious rights are such as would not.

Natural rights are, a man's right to his life, limbs, and liberty; his right to the produce of his personal labour; to the use, in common with others, of air, light, water. If a thousand different persons, from a thousand different corners of the world, were cast together upon a desert island, they would from the first be every one entitled to these rights.

Adventitious rights are, the right of a king over his subjects; of a general over his soldiers; of a judge over the life and liberty of a prisoner; a right to elect or appoint magistrates, to impose taxes, decide disputes, direct the descent or disposition of property; a right, in a word, in any one man, or particular body of men, to make laws and regulations for the rest. For none of these rights would exist in the newly inhabited island.

And here it will be asked, how adventitious rights are created; or, which is the same thing, how any new rights can accrue from the establishment of civil society; as rights of all kinds, we remember, depend upon the will of God, and civil society is but the ordinance and institution of man? For the solution of this difficulty, we must return to our first principles. God wills the happiness of mankind; and the existence of civil society, as conducive to that happiness. Consequently, many things, which are useful for the support of civil society in general, or for the conduct and conversation of particular societies already established, are, for that reason, "consistent with the will of God," or "right," which, without that reason, *i. e*, without the establishment of civil society, would not have been so.

From whence also it appears, that adventitious rights, though immediately derived from human appointment, are not, for that reason, less sacred than natural rights, nor the obligation to respect them less cogent. They both ultimately rely upon the same authority, the will of God. Such a man claims a right to a particular estate. He can shew, it is true, nothing for his right, but a rule of the civil community to which he belongs; and this rule may be arbitrary, capricious, and absurd. Notwithstanding all this, there would be the same sin in dispossessing the man of his estate by craft or violence, as if it had been assigned to him, like the partition of the country amongst the twelve tribes, by the immediate designation and appointment of Heaven.

II. Rights are alienable or inalienable.

Which terms explain themselves.

The right we have to most of those things which we call property, as houses, lands, money, &c. is alienable.

The right of a prince over his people, of a husband over his wife, of a master over his servant, is generally and naturally inalienable.

The distinction depends upon the mode of acquiring the right. If the right originate from a contract, and be limited to the *persons* by the express terms of the contract, or by the common interpretation of such contracts (which is equivalent to an express stipulation), or by a *personal condition*, annexed to the right; then it is inalienable. In all other cases it is alienable.

The right to civil liberty is alienable; though in the vehemence of men's zeal for it, and the language of some political remonstrances, it has often been pronounced to be an inalienable right. The true reason why mankind hold in detestation the memory of those who have sold their liberty to a tyrant, is, that, together with their own, they sold commonly, or endangered, the liberty of others; which certainly they had no right to dispose of.

III. Rights are perfect or imperfect.

Perfect rights may be asserted by force, or, what in civil society comes into the place of private force, by course of law.

Imperfect rights may not.

Examples of perfect rights.—A man's right to his life, person, house; for, if these be attacked, he may repel the attack by instant violence, or punish the aggressor by law; a man's right to his estate, furniture, clothes, money, and to all ordinary articles of property; for if they be injuriously taken from him, he may compel the author of the injury to make restitution or satisfaction.

Examples of imperfect rights.—In elections or appointments to offices, where the qualifications are prescribed, the best qualified candidate has a right to success; yet, if he be rejected, he has no remedy. He can neither seize the office by force, nor obtain redress at law; his right therefore is imperfect. A poor neighbour has a right to relief; yet, if it be refused him, he must not extort it. A benefactor has a right to returns of gratitude from the person he has obliged: yet, if he meet with none, he must acquiesce. Children have a right to affection and education from their parents; and parents, on their part, to duty and reverence from their children: yet if these rights be on either side withholden, there is no compulsion by which they can be enforced.

It may be at first view difficult to apprehend how a person should have a right to a thing, and yet have no right to use the means necessary to obtain it. This difficulty, like most others in morality, is resolvable into the necessity of general rules. The reader recollects, that a person is said to have a "right" to a thing, when it is consistent with the will of God" that he should possess it. So that the question is reduced to this: How it comes to pass that it should be consistent with the will of God that a person should possess a thing, and yet not be consistent with the same will that he should use force to obtain it? The answer is, that by reason of the indeterminateness,

either of the object, or of the circumstances of the right, the permission of force in this case would, in its consequence, lead to the permission of force in other cases, where there existed no right at all. The candidate above described has, no doubt, a right to success; but his right depends upon his qualifications, for instance, upon his comparative virtue, learning, &c.; there must be somebody therefore to compare them. The existence, degree, and respective importance, of these qualifications, for instance, upon his comparative virtue, learning, &c.; there must be somebody therefore to compare them. The existence, degree, and respective importance, of these qualifications, are all indeterminate; there must be somebody therefore to determine them. To allow the candidate to demand success by force, is to make him the judge of his own qualifications. You cannot do this but you must make all other candidates the same; which would open a door to demands without number, reason, or right. In like manner, a poor man has a right to relief from the rich; but the mode, season, and quantum, of that relief, who shall contribute to it, or how much, are not ascertained. Yet these points must be ascertained, before a claim to relief can be prosecuted by force. For, to allow the poor to ascertain them for themselves, would be to expose property to so many of these claims, that it would lose its value, or rather its nature, that is, cease indeed to be property. The same observation holds of all other cases of imperfect rights; not to mention, that in the instances of gratitude, affection, reverence, and the like, force is excluded by the very idea of the duty, which must be voluntary, or cannot exist at all.

Wherever the right is imperfect, the corresponding obligation is so too. I am obliged to prefer the best candidate, to relieve the poor, be grateful to my benefactors, take care of my children, and reverence my parents; but in all these cases, my obligation, like their right, is imperfect.

I call these obligations "imperfect," in conformity to the established language of writers upon the subject. The term, however, seems ill chosen on this account, that it leads many to imagine, that there is less guilt in the violation of an imperfect obligation, than of a perfect one; which is a groundless notion. For an obligation being perfect or imperfect, determines only whether violence may or may not be employed to enforce it? and determines nothing else. The degree of guilt incurred by violating the obligation, is a different thing, and is determined by circumstances altogether independent of this distinction. He who by a partial, prejudiced, or corrupt vote, disappoints a worthy candidate of a station in life, upon which his hopes, possibly, or livelihood, depended, and who thereby grievously discourages merit and emulation in others, commits, I am persuaded, a much greater crime, than if he filched a book out of a library, or picked a pocket of a handkerchief: though in the one case he violates only an imperfect right, in the other a perfect one.

As positive precepts are often indeterminate in their extent, and as the indeterminateness of an obligation is that which makes it imperfect; it comes to pass, that positive precepts commonly produce an imperfect obligation.

Negative precepts or prohibitions, being generally precise, constitute accordingly perfect obligations.

The fifth commandment is positive, and the duty which results from it is imperfect.

The sixth commandment is negative, and imposes a perfect obligation.

Religion and virtue find their principal exercise among the imperfect obligations; the laws of civil society taking pretty good care of the rest.

CHAPTER XI.

The general rights of mankind.

BY the General Rights of Mankind, I mean the rights which belong to the species collectively; the stock, as I may say, which they have since distributed among themselves.

These are,

1. A right to the fruits or vegetable produce of the earth.

The insensible parts of the creation are incapable of injury; and it is nugatory to inquire into the right, where the use can be attended with no injury. But it may be worth observing, for the sake of an inference which will appear below, that, as God had created us with a want and desire of food, and provided things suited by their nature to sustain and satisfy us, we may fairly presume, that he intended we should apply these things to that purpose.

2. A right to the flesh of animals.

This is a very different claim from the former. Some excuse seems necessary for the pain and loss which we occasion to brutes, by restraining them of their liberty, mutilating their bodies, and, at last, putting an end to their lives (which we suppose to be the whole of their existence), for our pleasure or conveniency.

The reasons alleged in vindication of this practice, are the following: that the several species of brutes being created to prey upon one another, affords a kind of analogy to prove that the human species were intended to feed upon them; that, if let alone, they would overrun the earth, and exclude mankind from the occupation of it; that they are requited for what they suffer at our hands, by our care and protection.

Upon which reasons I would observe, that *the analogy* contended for is extremely lame; since brutes have no power to support life by any other means, and since we have; for the whole human species might subsist entirely upon fruit, pulse, herbs, and roots, as many tribes of Hindoos actually do. The two other reasons may be valid reasons, as far as they go; for, no doubt, if man had been supported entirely by vegetable food, a great part of those animals which die to furnish his table, would never have lived; but they by no means justify our right over the lives of brutes to the extent in which we exercise it. What danger is there, for instance, of fish interfering with us, in the occupation of their element? or what do *we* contribute to their support or preservation.

It seems to me, that it would be difficult to defend this right by any arguments which the light and order of nature afford; and that we are beholden for it to the permission recorded in Scripture, Gen. ix. 1—3; "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth: and the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered; every moving thing shall be meat for you; even as the green herb, have I given you all things." To Adam and his posterity had been granted, at the creation, "every green herb for meat," and nothing more. In the last clause of the passage now produced, the old grant is recited, and extended to the flesh of animals; "even as the green herb, have I given you all things." But this was not till after the flood; the inhabitants of the antediluvian world had therefore no such permission, that we know of. Whether they actually refrained from the flesh of animals, is another question. Abel, we read, was a keeper of sheep; and for what purpose he kept them, except for food, is difficult to say (unless it were sacrifices): might not, however, some of the stricter sects among the antedeluvians be scrupulous as to this point? and might not Noah and his family be of this description? for it is not probable that God would publish a permission, to authorize a practice which had never been disputed

Wanton, and, what is worse, studied cruelty to brutes, is certainly wrong, as coming within none of these reasons.

From reason then, or revelation, or from both together, it appears to be God Almighty's intention, that the productions of the earth should be applied to the sustentation of human life. Consequently all waste and misapplication of these productions, is contrary to the Divine intention and will; and therefore wrong, for the same reason that any other crime is so. Such as, what is related of William the Conqueror, the converting of twenty manors into a forest for hunting; or which is not much better, suffering them to continue in that state; or, the letting of large tracts of land lie barren, because the owner cannot cultivate them, nor will part with them to those who can; or destroying, or suffering to perish, great part of an article of human provision, in order to enhance the price of the remainder (which is said to have been, till lately, the case with fish caught upon the English coast); or diminishing the breed of animals, by a wanton, or improvident, consumption of the young, as of the spawn of shell-fish, or the fry of salmon, by the use of unlawful nets, or at improper seasons: to this head may also be referred, what is the same evil in a smaller way, the expending of human food on superfluous dogs or horses: and lastly, the reducing of the quantity, in order to alter the quality, and to alter it generally for the worse; as the distillation of spirits from bread-corn, the boiling down of solid meat for sauces, essences, &c.

This seems to be the lesson which our Saviour, after his manner, inculcates, when he bids his disciples "gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." And it opens indeed a new field of duty. Schemes of wealth or profit, prompt the active part of mankind to cast about, how they may convert their property to the most advantage; and their own advantage, and that of the public, commonly concur. But it has not as yet entered into the minds of mankind, to reflect that it is a *duty*, to add what we can to the common stock of provision, by extracting out of our estates the most they will yield; or that it is any sin to neglect this.

From the same intention of God Almighty, we also deduce another conclusion, namely, "that nothing ought to be made exclusive property, which can be conveniently enjoyed in common."

It is the general intention of God Almighty, that the produce of the earth be applied to the use of man. This appears from the constitution of nature, or, if you will, from his express declaration; and this is all that appears at first. Under this general donation, one man has the same right as another. You pluck an apple from a tree, or take a lamb from a flock, for your immediate use and nourishment, and I do the same; and we both plead for what we do, the general intention of the Supreme Proprietor. So far all is right: but you cannot claim the whole tree, or the whole flock, and exclude me from any share of them, and plead this general intention for what you do. The plea will not serve you; you must shew something more. You must shew, by probable arguments at least, that it is God's intention, that these things should be parcelled out to individuals; and that the established distribution, under which you claim, should be upholden. Shew me this, and I am satisfied. But until this be shewn, the general intention, which has been made appear, and which is all that does appear, must prevail; and, under that, my title is as good as yours. Now there is no argument to induce such a presumption, but one; that the thing cannot be enjoyed at all, or enjoyed with the same, or with nearly the same advantage, while it continues in common, as when appropriated. This is true, where there is not enough for all, or where the article in question requires care or labour in the production or preservation; but where no such reason obtains, and the thing is in its nature capable of being enjoyed by as many as will, it seems an arbitrary usurpation upon the rights of mankind, to confine the use of it to any.

If a medicinal spring were discovered in a piece of ground which was private property, copious enough for every purpose to which it could be applied, I would award a compensation to the owner of the field, and a liberal profit to the author of the discovery, especially if he had bestowed pains or expence upon the search: but I question whether any human laws would be justified, or would justify the owner, in prohibiting mankind from the use of the water, or setting such a price upon it, as would almost amount to a prohibition.

If there be fisheries which are inexhaustible, as the cod-fishery upon the Banks of Newfoundland, and the herring-fishery in the British seas, are said to be; then all those conventions, by which one or two nations claim to themselves, and guarantee to each other, the exclusive enjoyment of these fisheries, are so many encroachments upon the general rights of mankind.

Upon the same principle may be determined a question, which makes a great figure in books of natural law, *utrum mare sit liberum?* that is, as I understand it, whether the exclusive right of navigating particular seas, or a control over the navigation of these seas, can be claimed, consistently with the law of nature, by any nation? What is necessary for each nation's safety, we allow; as their own bays, creeks, and harbours, the sea contiguous to, that is, within cannon-shot, or three leagues of, their coast: and upon this principle of safety (if upon any principle) must be defended the claim of the Venetian State to the Adriatic, of Denmark to the Baltic Sea, and of Great Britain to the seas which invest the island. But when Spain asserts a right to the Pacific Ocean, or Portugal to the Indian Seas, or when any nation extends its pretensions much beyond the limits of its own territories, they erect a claim which interferes with the benevolent designs of Providence, and which no human authority can justify.

3. Another right which may be called a general right, as it is incidental to every man who is in a situation to claim it, is the right of extreme necessity; by which is meant a right to use or destroy another's property, when, it is necessary for our own preservation to do so: as a right to take, without or against the owner's leave, the first food, clothes, or shelter, we meet with, when we are in danger of perishing through want of them; a right to throw goods overboard, to save the ship; or to pull down a house, in order to stop the progress of a fire; and a few other instances of the same kind. Of which right the foundation seems to be this: that when property was first instituted, the institution was not intended to operate to the destruction of any; therefore, when such consequences would follow, all regard to it is superseded. Or rather, perhaps, these are the few cases, where the particular consequence exceeds the general consequence; where the remote mischief resulting from the violation of the general rule, is overbalanced by the immediate advantage.

Restitution however is due, when in our power: because the laws of property are to be adhered to, so far as consists with safety; and because restitution, which is one of those laws, supposes the danger to be over. But what is to be restored? Not the full value of the property destroyed, but what it was worth at the time of destroying it; which, considering the danger it was in of perishing, might be very little.

BOOK III.

RELATIVE DUTIES.

OF RELATIVE DUTIES WHICH ARE DETERMINATE.

CHAPTER I.

Of property.

IF you should see a flock of pigeons in a field of corn; and if (instead of each picking where and what it liked, taking just as much as it wanted, and no more) you should see ninety-nine of them gathering all they got into a heap; reserving nothing for themselves but the chaff and the refuse; keeping this heap for one, and that the weakest, perhaps worst, pigeon of the flock; sitting round, and looking on, all the winter, whilst this one was devouring, throwing about, and wasting it; and if a pigeon more hardy or hungry than the rest, touched a grain of the hoard, all the others instantly flying upon it, and tearing it to pieces;—If you should see this, you would see nothing more than what is every day practised and established among men. Among men, you see the ninety-and-nine toiling and scraping together a heap of superfluities for one (and this one too, oftentimes, the feeblest and worst of the whole set—a child, a woman, a madman, or a fool); getting nothing for themselves all the while, but a little of the coarsest of the provision, which their own industry produces; looking quietly on, while they see the fruits of all their labour spent or spoiled: and if one of the number take or touch a particle of the hoard, the others joining against him, and hanging him for the theft.

CHAPTER II.

The use of the institution of property.

THERE must be some very important advantages to account for an institution, which, in the view of it above given, is so paradoxical and unnatural.

The principal of these advantages are the following:

I. It increases the produce of the earth.

The earth, in climates like ours, produces little without cultivation: and none would be found willing to cultivate the ground, if others were to be admitted to an equal share of the produce. The same is true of the care of flocks and herds of tame animals.

Crabs and acorns, red deer, rabbits, game, and fish, are all which we should have to subsist upon in this country, if we trusted to the spontaneous productions of the soil; and it fares not much better with other countries. A nation of North-American savages, consisting of two or three hundred, will take up, and be half starved upon, a tract of land, which in Europe, and with European management, would be sufficient for the maintenance of as many thousands.

In some fertile soils, together with great abundance of fish upon their coasts, and in regions where clothes are unnecessary, a considerable degree of population may subsist without property in land, which is the case in the islands of Otaheite: but in less favoured situations, as in the country of New Zealand, though this sort of property obtain in a small degree, the inhabitants, for want of a more secure and regular establishment of it, are driven oftentimes by the scarcity of provision to devour one another.

II. It preserves the produce of the earth to maturity.

We may judge what would be the effects of a community of right to the productions of the earth, from the trifling specimens which we see of it at present. A cherry-tree in a hedge-row, nuts in a wood, the grass of an unstinted pasture, are seldom of much advantage to any body, because people do not wait for the proper season of reaping them. Corn, if any were sown, would never ripen; lambs and calves would never grow up to sheep and cows, because the first person that met them would reflect, that he had better take them as they are, than leave them for another.

III. It prevents contests.

War and waste, tumult and confusion, must be unavoidable and eternal, where there is not enough for all, and where there are no rules to adjust the division.

IV. It improves the conveniency of living.

This it does two ways. It enables mankind to divide themselves into distinct professions; which is impossible, unless a man can exchange the productions of his own art for what he wants from others; and exchange implies property. Much of the advantage of civilized over savage life depends upon this. When a man is from necessity, his own tailor, tent-maker, carpenter, cook, huntsman and fisherman, it is not probable that he will be expert at any of his callings. Hence the rude habitations, furniture, clothing, and implements, of

savages; and the tedious length of time which all their operations require.

It likewise encourages those arts by which the accommodations of human life, are supplied, by appropriating to the artist the benefit of his discoveries and improvements; without which appropriation, ingenuity will never be exerted with effect.

Upon these several accounts we may venture, with a few exceptions, to pronounce that even the poorest and the worst provided, in countries where property and the consequences of property prevail, are in a better situation, with respect to food, raiment, houses, and what are called the necessaries of life, than *any* are in places where most things remain in common.

The balance, therefore, upon the whole must preponderate in favour of property with a manifest and great excess.

Inequality of property, in the degree in which it exists in most countries of Europe, abstractedly considered, is an evil; but it is an evil which flows from those rules, concerning the acquisition and disposal of property, by which men are incited to industry, and by which the object of their industry is rendered secure and valuable. If there be any great inequality unconnected with this origin, it ought to be corrected.

CHAPTER III.

The history of property.

THE first objects of property were the fruits which a man gathered, and the wild animals he caught; next to these, the tents or houses which he built, the tools he made use of to catch or prepare his food; and afterward weapons of war and offence. Many of the savage tribes in North America have advanced no farther than this yet; for they are said to reap their harvest, and return the produce of their market with foreigners, into the common hoard or treasury of the tribe. Flocks and herds of tame animals soon became property: Abel, the second from Adam, was a keeper of sheep; sheep and oxen, camels and asses, composed the wealth of the Jewish patriarchs, as they do still of the modern Arabs. As the world was first peopled in the east, where there existed a great scarcity of water, wells probably were next made property; as we learn from the frequent and serious mention of them in the Old Testament; the contentions and treaties about them;* and from its being recorded, among the most memorable achievements of very eminent men, that they dug or discovered a well. Land which is now so important a part of property, which alone our laws call real property, and regard upon all occasions with such peculiar attention, was probably not made property in any country, till long after the institution of many other species of property, that is, till the country became populous, and tillage began to be thought of. The first partition of an estate which we read of, was

* Genesis xxi. 25. xxvi. 18.

that which took place between Abram and Lot, and was one of the simplest imaginable: "If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." There are no traces of property in land in Cæsar's account of Britain; little of it in the history of the Jewish patriarchs; none of it found amongst the nations of North America; the Scythians are expressly said to have appropriated their cattle and houses, but to have left their land in common.

Property in immoveables continued at first no longer than the occupation: that is, so long as a man's family continued in possession of a cave, or whilst his flocks depastured upon a neighbouring hill, no one attempted or thought he had a right, to disturb or drive them out; but when the man quitted his cave, or changed his pasture, the first who found them unoccupied, entered upon them, by the same title as his predecessor's; and made way in his turn for any one that happened to succeed him. All more permanent property in land was probably posterior to civil government and to laws; and therefore settled by these, or according to the will of the reigning chief.

CHAPTER IV.

In what the right of property is founded.

WE now speak of Property in Land: and there is a difficulty in explaining the origin of this property, consistently with the law of nature: for the land was once, no doubt, common; and the question is, how any particular part of it could justly be taken out of the common, and so appropriated to the first owner, as to give him a better right to it than others; and, what is more, a right to exclude all others from it.

Moralists have given many different accounts of this matter; which diversity alone, perhaps is a proof that none of them are satisfactory.

One tells us that mankind, when they suffered a particular person to occupy a piece of ground, by tacit consent relinquished their right to it; and as the piece of ground, they say, belonged to mankind collectively, and mankind thus gave up their right to the first peaceable occupier, it thenceforward became his property, and no one afterward had a right to molest him in it.

The objection to this account is, that consent can never be presumed from silence, where the person whose consent is required knows nothing about the matter; which must have been the case with all mankind, except the neighbourhood of the place where the appropriation was made. And to suppose that the piece of ground previously belonged to the neighbourhood, and that they had a just power of conferring a right to it upon whom they pleased, is to suppose the question resolved, and a partition of land to have already taken place.

Another says, that each man's limbs and labour are his own exclusively: that by occupying a piece of ground, a man inseparably mixes

his labour with it; by which means the piece of ground becomes thenceforward his own, as you cannot take it from him without depriving him at the same time of something which is indisputably *his*.

This is Mr. Locke's solution; and seems indeed a fair reason, where the value of the labour bears a considerable proportion to the value of the thing; or where the thing derives its chief use and value from the labour. Thus game and fish, though they be common whilst at large in the woods or water, instantly become the property of the person that catches them; because an animal, when caught, is much more valuable than when at liberty: and this increase of value, which is inseparable from, and makes a great part of, the whole value, is strictly the property of the fowler or fisherman, being the produce of his personal labour. For the same reason, wood or iron, manufactured into utensils, becomes the property of the manufacturer; because the value of the workmanship far exceeds that of the materials. And upon a similar principle, a parcel of unappropriated ground, which a man should pare, burn, plough, harrow, and sow, for the production of corn, would justly enough be thereby made his own. But this will hardly hold, in the manner it has been applied, of taking a ceremonious possession of a tract of land, as navigators do of new discovered islands, by erecting a standard, engraving an inscription, or publishing a proclamation to the birds and beasts; or of turning your cattle into a piece of ground, setting up a landmark, digging a ditch, or planting a hedge round it. Nor will even the clearing, manuring, and ploughing, of a field, give the first occupier a right to it in perpetuity, and after this cultivation and all effects of it are ceased.

Another, and in my opinion a better, account of the first right of ownership, is the following; that, as God has provided these things for the use of all, he has of consequence given each leave to take of them what he wants: by virtue therefore of this leave, a man may appropriate what he stands in need of to his own use, without asking or waiting for, the consent of others; in like manner as, when an entertainment is provided for the freeholders of a county, each freeholder goes, and eats and drinks what he wants or chooses, without having or waiting for the consent of the other guests.

But then this reason justifies property, as far as necessaries alone, or at the most, as far as a competent provision for our natural exigencies. For in the entertainment we speak of (allowing the comparison to hold in all points), although every particular freeholder may sit down and eat till he be satisfied, without any other leave than that of the master of the feast, or any other proof of that leave, than the general invitation, or the manifest design with which the entertainment is provided; yet you would hardly permit any one to fill his pockets or his wallet, or to carry away with him a quantity of provision to be hoarded up, or wasted, or given to his dogs, or stewed down into sauces, or converted into articles of superfluous luxury; especially, if, by so doing, he pinched the guests at the lower end of the table.

These are the accounts that have been given of the matter by the *best writers* upon the subject; but, were these accounts perfectly un-

exceptionable, they would none of them, I fear, avail us in vindicating our present claims of property in land, unless it were more probable than it is, that our estates were actually acquired, at first, in some of the ways which these accounts suppose; and that a regular regard had been paid to justice, in every successive transmission of them since; for, if one link in the chain fail, every title posterior to it falls to the ground.

The real foundation of our right is, THE LAW OF THE LAND.

It is the intention of God, that the produce of the earth be applied to the use of man: this intention cannot be fulfilled without establishing property; it is consistent therefore with his will, that property be established. The land cannot be divided into separate property without leaving it to the law of the country to regulate that division; it is consistent therefore with the same will, that the law should regulate the division; and, consequently, "consistent with the will of God," or "right," that I should possess that share which these regulations assign me.

By whatever circuitous train of reasoning you attempt to derive this right, it must terminate at last in the will of God; the straightest, therefore, and shortest way of arriving at this will, is the best.

Hence it appears, that my right to an estate does not at all depend upon the manner or justice of the original acquisition; nor upon the justice of each subsequent change of possession. It is not, for instance, the less, nor ought it to be impeached, because the estate was taken possession of at first by a family of aboriginal Britons, who happened to be stronger than their neighbours; nor because the British possessor was turned out by a Roman, or the Roman by a Saxon invader; nor because it was seized, without colour of right or reason, by a follower of the Norman adventurer; from whom, after many interruptions of fraud and violence, it has at length devolved to me.

Nor does the owner's right depend upon the *expediency* of the law which gives it to him. On one side of a brook, an estate descends to the eldest son; on the other side, to all the children alike. The right of the claimaints under both laws of inheritance is equal; though the expediency of such opposite rules must necessarily be different.

The principles we have laid down upon this subject, apparently tend to a conclusion of which a bad use is apt to be made. As the right of property depends upon the law of the land, it seems to follow that a man has a right to keep and take every thing which the law will allow him to keep and take; which in many cases will authorize the most flagitious chicanery. If a creditor upon a simple contract neglect to demand his debt for six years, the debtor may refuse to pay it: would it be *right* therefore to do so, where he is conscious of the justness of the debt? If a person who is under twenty-one years of age, contract a bargain (other than for necessaries), he may avoid it by pleading his minority: but would this be a fair plea, where the bargain was originally just?—The distinction to be taken in such cases is this: With the law, we acknowledge, resides the disposal of property; so long, therefore, as we keep within the design and intention of a law, that law will justify us as well *in foro conscientiæ*, as *in foro humano*, whatever be the equity or expediency of the law itself. But when we

convert to one purpose, a rule or expression of law, which is intended for another purpose, then we plead in our justification, not the intention of the law, but the words: that is, we plead a dead letter, which can signify nothing; for words *without* meaning or intention have no force or effect in justice; much less, words taken *contrary* to the meaning or intention of the speaker, or writer. To apply this distinction to the examples just now proposed;—In order to protect men against antiquated demands, from which it is not probable they should have preserved the evidence of their discharge, the law prescribes a limited time to certain species of private securities, beyond which it will not enforce them, or lend its assistance to the recovery of the debt. If a man be ignorant or dubious of the justice of the demand made upon him, he may conscientiously plead this limitation: because *he applies the rule of law to the purpose for which it was intended.* But when he refuses to pay a debt, of the reality of which he is conscious, he cannot, as before, plead the intention of the statute, and the supreme authority of law, unless he could shew, that the law *intended* to interpose its supreme authority, to acquit men of debts, of the existence and justice of which they were themselves sensible. Again, to preserve youth from the practices and impositions to which their inexperience exposes them, the law compels the payment of no debts incurred within a certain age, nor the performance of any engagements, except for such necessaries as are suited to their condition and fortunes. If a young person therefore perceive that he has been practised or imposed upon, he may honestly avail himself of the privilege of his non-age, to defeat the circumvention. But, if he shelter himself under this privilege, to avoid a fair obligation, or an equitable contract, he extends the privilege to a case, in which it is not allowed by intention of law, and in which consequently it does not, in natural justice, exist.

As property is the principal subject of justice or of "the determinate relative duties," we have put down what we had to say upon *it* in the first place; we now proceed to state these duties in the best order we can.

CHAPTER V.

Promises.

I. *From whence the obligation to perform promises arises.*
II. *In what sense promises are to be interpreted.*
III. *In what cases promises are not binding.*

1. *From whence the obligation to perform promises arises.*

They who argue from innate moral principles, suppose a sense of obligation of promises to be one of them; but without assuming this or any thing else, without proof, the obligation to perform promises

may be deduced from the necessity of such a conduct to the well-being, or the existence indeed, of human society.

Men act from expectation. Expectation is in most cases determined by the assurances and engagements which we receive from others. If no dependance could be placed upon these assurances, it would be impossible to know what judgment to form of many future events, or how to regulate our conduct with respect to them.

Confidence therefore in promises, is essential to the intercourse of human life; because without it, the greatest part of our conduct would proceed upon chance. But there could be no confidence in promises, if men were not obliged to perform them; the obligation therefore to perform promises, is essential, to the same ends, and in the same degree.

Some may imagine, that if this obligation were suspended, a general caution and mutual distrust would ensue, which might do as well; but this is imagined, without considering how, every hour of our lives, we trust to, and depend upon, others; and how impossible it is to stir a step, or, what is worse, to sit still a moment, without such trust and dependance. I am now writing at my ease, not doubting (or rather never distrusting, and therefore never thinking about it), that the butcher will send in the joint of meat which I ordered; that his servant will bring it; that my cook will dress it; that my footman will serve it up; and that I shall find it upon table at one o'clock. Yet have I nothing for all this, but the promise of the butcher, and the implied promise of his servant and mine. And the same holds of the most important as well as the most familiar occurrences of social life. In the one, the intervention of promises is formal, and is seen and acknowledged; our instance, therefore, is intended to shew it in the other, where it is not so distinctly observed.

II. *In what sense promises are to be interpeted.*

Where the terms of promises admit of more senses than one, the promise is to be performed "in that sense in which the promiser apprehended, at the time, that the promisee received it."

It is not the sense in which the promiser actually intended it; that always governs the interpretation of an equivocal promise; because, at that rate, you might excite expectations, which you never meant, nor would be obliged, to satisfy. Much less is it the sense in which the promisee actually received the promise; for, according to that rule, you might be drawn into engagements, which you never designed to undertake. It must therefore be the sense, (for there is no other remaining) in which the promiser believed that the promisee accepted his promise.

This will not differ from the actual intention of the promiser, where the promise is given without collusion or reserve; but we put the rule in the above form, to exclude evasion in cases in which the popular meaning of a phrase, and the strict grammatical signification of the words, differ: or, in general, wherever the promiser attempts to make his escape through some ambiguity in the expressions which he used.

Temures promised the garrison of Sebastia, that, if they would surrender, *no blood should be shed.* The garrison surrendered; and Temures buried them all alive. Now Temures fulfilled the promise

in one sense, and in the sense too in which he intended it at the time; but not in the sense in which the garrison of Sebastia actually received it, nor in the sense in which Temures himself knew that the garrison received it: which last sense, according to our rule, was the sense in which he was in conscience bound to have performed it.

From the account we have given of the obligation of promises, it is evident, that this obligation depends upon the *expectations* which we knowingly and voluntarily excite. Consequently, any action or conduct towards another, which we are sensible excites expectations in that other, is as much a promise, and creates as strict an obligation, as the most express assurances. Taking, for instance, a kinsman's child, and educating him for a liberal profession, or in a manner suitable only for the heir of a large fortune, as much obliges us to place him in that profession, or to leave him such a fortune, as if we had given him a promise to do so under our hands and seals. In like manner, a great man, who encourages an indigent retainer; or a minister of state, who distinguishes and caresses at his levee one who is in a situation to be obliged by his patronage; engages, by such behaviour, to provide for him.—This is the foundation of *tacit promises*.

You may either simply declare your present intention, or you may accompany your declaration with an engagement to abide by it, which constitutes a complete promise. In the first case, the duty is satisfied, if you were *sincere* at the time, that is, if you entertained at the time the intention you expressed, however soon, or for whatever reason, you afterward change it. In the latter case, you have parted with the liberty of changing. All this is plain: but it must be observed, that most of those forms of speech, which, strictly taken, amount to no more than declarations of present intention, do yet, in the usual way of understanding them, excite the expectation, and therefore carry with them the force of absolute promises. Such as, "I intend you this place"—"I design to leave you this estate"—"I purpose giving you my vote"—"I mean to serve you." In which, although the "intention," the "design," the "purpose," the "meaning," be expressed in words of the present time, yet you cannot afterward recede from them without a breach of good faith. If you choose therefore to make known your present intention, and yet to reserve to yourself the liberty of changing it, you must guard your expressions by an additional clause, as "I intend *at present*"—"*if I do not alter*,"—or the like. And after all, as there can be no reason for communicating your intention, but to excite some degree of expectation or other, a wanton change of an intention which is once disclosed, always disappoints somebody; and is always, for that reason, wrong.

There is, in some men, an infirmity with regard to promises, which often betrays them into great distress. From the confusion, or hesitation, or obscurity, with which they express themselves, especially when overawed or taken by surprise, they sometimes encourage expectations, and bring upon themselves demands, which, possibly they never dreamed of. This is a want, not so much of integrity, as of presence of mind.

III. *In what cases promises are not binding.*

1. Promises are not binding, where the performance is *impossible*.

But observe, that the promiser is guilty of a fraud, if he be secretly aware of the impossibility, at the time of making the promise. For, when any one promises a thing, he asserts his belief, at least, of the possibility of performing it; as no one can accept or understand a promise under any other supposition. Instances of this sort are the following: The minister promises a place, which he knows to be engaged, or not at his disposal:—A father, in settling marriage-articles promises to leave his daughter an estate, which he knows to be entailed upon the heir-male of his family:—A merchant promises a ship, or share of a ship, which he is privately advised is lost at sea:—An incumbent promises to resign a living, being previously assured that his resignation will not be accepted by the bishop. The promiser, as in these cases, with knowledge of the impossibility, is justly answerable in an equivalent; but otherwise not.

When the promiser himself occasions the impossibility, it is neither more nor less than a direct breach of the promise; as when a soldier maims, or a servant disables himself, to get rid of his engagements.

2. Promises are not binding, where the performance is *unlawful*.

There are two cases of this: one, where the unlawfulness is known to the parties, at the time of making the promise; as where an assassin promises his employer to despatch his rival or his enemy; a servant to betray his master; a pimp to procure a mistress; or a *friend* to give his assistance in a scheme of seduction. The parties in these cases are not obliged to perform what the promise requires, *because they were under a prior obligation to the contrary*. From which prior obligation what is there to discharge them? Their promise,—their own act and deed. But an obligation, from which a man can discharge himself by his own act, is no obligation at all. The guilt therefore of such promises lies in the making, not in the breaking of them; and if, in the interval betwixt the promise and the performance, a man so far recover his reflection, as to repent of his engagements, he ought certainly to break through them.

The other case is, where the unlawfulness did not exist, or was not known, at the time of making the promise; as where a merchant promises his correspondent abroad, to send him a ship load of corn at a time appointed, and before the time arrive, an embargo is laid upon the exportation of corn:—A woman gives a promise of marriage: before the marriage, she discovers that her intended husband is too nearly related to her, or that he has a wife yet living. In all such cases, where the contrary does not appear, it must be presumed that the parties supposed what they promised to be lawful, and that the promise proceeded entirely upon this supposition. The lawfulness therefore becomes a condition of the promise; which condition failing, the obligation ceases. Of the same nature was Herod's promise to his daughter-in-law, "that he would give her whatever she asked even to the half of his kingdom." The promise was not unlawful in the terms in which Herod delivered it; and when it became so by the daughter's choice by her demanding "John the Baptist's head," Herod was discharged from the obligation of it, for the reason now laid down, as well as for that given in the last paragraph.

This rule, "that promises are void, where the performance is un-

lawful," extends also to imperfect obligations; for, the reason of the rule holds of all obligations. Thus, if you promise a man a place, or your vote, and he afterward render himself unfit to receive either, you are absolved from the obligation of your promise; or, if a better candidate appear, and it be a case in which you are bound by oath, or otherwise, to govern yourself by the qualification, the promise must be broken through.

And here I would recommend, to young persons especially, a caution, from the neglect of which many involve themselves in embarrassment and disgrace; and that is, "never to give a promise, which may interfere in the event with their duty"; for, if it do so interfere, their duty must be discharged, though at the expense of their promise, and not unusually of their good name.

The specific performance of promises is reckoned a perfect obligation. And many casuists have laid down, in opposition to what has been here asserted, that, where a perfect and an imperfect obligation clash, the perfect obligation is to be preferred. For which opinion, however, there seems to be no reason, but what arises from the terms "perfect," and "imperfect," the impropriety of which has been remarked above. The truth is, of two contradictory obligations, that ought to prevail which is prior in point of time.

It is the *performance* being unlawful, and not any unlawfulness in the subject or motive of the promise, which destroys its validity: therefore a bribe, after the vote is given; the wages of prostitution; the reward of any crime, after the crime is committed: ought, if promised, to be paid. For the sin and mischief, by this supposition, are over; and will be neither more nor less for the performance of the promise.

In like manner, a promise does not lose its obligation merely because it proceeded from an *unlawful motive.* A certain person, in the life-time of his wife, who was then sick, had paid his addresses and promised marriage, to another woman; the wife died; and the woman demanded performance of the promise. The man, who, it seems, had changed his mind, either felt or pretended doubts concerning the obligation of such a promise, and referred his case to Bishop Sanderson, the most eminent in this kind of knowledge of his time. Bishop Sanderson, after writing a dissertation upon the question, adjudged the promise to be void: in which, however, upon our principles, he was wrong; for, however criminal the affection might be which induced the promise, the performance, when it was demanded, was lawful; which is the only lawfulness required.

A promise cannot be deemed unlawful, where it produces, when performed, no effect, beyond what would have taken place had the promise never been made. And this is the single case, in which the obligation of a promise will justify a conduct, which, unless it had been promised, would be unjust. A captive may lawfully recover his liberty, by a promise of neutrality; for his conqueror takes nothing by the promise, which he might not have secured by his death or confinement; and neutrality would be innocent in him, although criminal in another. It is manifest, however, that promises which come into the place of coercion, can extend no farther than to passive compliances, for coercion itself could compel no more. Upon the same principle

promises of secrecy ought not to be violated, although the public would derive advantage from the discovery. Such promises contain no unlawfulness in them, to destroy their obligation: for, as the information would not have been imparted upon any other condition, the public lose nothing by the promise, which they would have gained without it.

3. Promises are not binding, where they *contradict a former promise.*

Because the performance is then unlawful; which resolves this case into the last.

4. Promises are not binding *before acceptance;* that is, before notice given to the promisee; for, where the promise is beneficial, if notice be given, acceptance may be presumed. Until the promise be communicated to the promisee, it is the same only as a resolution in the mind of the promiser, which may be altered at pleasure. For no expectation has been excited, therefore none can be disappointed.

But suppose I declare my intention to a third person, who, without any authority from me, conveys my declaration to the promisee; is that such a notice as will be binding upon me? It certainly is not: for I have not done that which constitutes the essence of a promise; I have not *voluntarily* excited expectation.

5. Promises are not binding which are *released by the promisee.*

This is evident; but it may be sometimes doubted who the promisee is. If I give a promise to A, of a place or vote for B; as to a father for his son; to an uncle for his nephew; to a friend of mine, for a relation or friend of his; then A is the promisee, whose consent I must obtain, to be released from the engagement.

If I promise a place or vote to B *by* A, that is, if A be a messenger to convey the promise, as if I should say, "You may tell B that he shall have this place, or may depend upon my vote; or if A be employed to introduce B's request, and I answer in any terms which amount to a compliance with it; then B is the promisee.

Promises to one person, for the benefit of another, are not released by the death of the promisee; for, his death neither makes the performance impracticable, nor implies any consent to release the promiser from it.

6. *Erroneous* promises are not binding in certain cases; as,

1. Where the error proceeds from the mistake or misrepresentation of the promisee.

Because a promise evidently supposes the truth of the account, which the promisee relates in order to obtain it. A beggar solicits your charity by a story of the most piteable distress; you promise to relieve him, if he will call again:—In the interval you discover his story to be made up of lies;—this discovery no doubt, releases you from your promise. One who wants your service describes the business or office for which he would engage you;—you promise to undertake it: when you come to enter upon it, you find the profits less, the labour more, or some material circumstance different from the account he gave you:—In such case you are not bound by your promise.

2. When the promise is understood by the promisee to proceed upon a certain supposition, or when the promiser apprehended it to

be so understood, and that supposition turns out to be false; then the promise is not binding.

This intricate rule will be best explained by an example. A father receives an account from abroad, of the death of his only son;—soon after which, he promises his fortune to his nephew. The account turns out to be false. The father, we say, is released from his promise; not merely because he never would have made it, had he known the truth of the case,—for that alone will not do;—but because the nephew also himself understood the promise to proceed upon the supposition of his cousin's death: or, at least, his uncle thought he so understood it; and could not think otherwise. The promise proceeded upon this supposition in the promiser's own apprehension, and, as he believed, in the apprehension of both parties; and this belief of his, is the precise circumstance which sets him free. The foundation of the rule is plainly this: a man is bound only to satisfy the expectation which he intended to excite; whatever condition therefore he intended to subject that expectation to becomes an essential condition of the promise.

Errors, which come not within this description, do not annul the obligation of a promise. I promise a candidate my vote;—presently another candidate appears, for whom I certainly would have reserved it, had I been acquainted with his design. Here, therefore, as before, my promise proceeded from an error; and I never should have given such a promise, had I been aware of the truth of the case, as it has turned out.—But the *promisee* did not know this;—*he* did not receive the promise, subject to any such condition, or as proceeding from any such supposition;—nor did I at the time imagine he so received it. This error, therefore, of mine, must fall upon my own head, and the promise be observed notwithstanding. A father promises a certain fortune with his daughter, supposing himself to be worth so much—his circumstances turn out, upon examination, worse than he was aware of. Here again the promise was erroneous, but, for the reason assigned in the last case, will nevertheless be obligatory.

The case of erroneous promises is attended with some difficulty: for, to allow every mistake, or change of circumstances, to dissolve the obligation of a promise, would be to allow a latitude, which might evacuate the force of almost all promises: and, on the other hand, to gird the obligation so tight, as to make no allowances for manifest and fundamental errors, would, in many instances, be productive of great hardship and absurdity.

It has long been controverted amongst moralists, whether promises be binding, which are extorted by violence or fear. The obligation of all promises results, we have seen, from the necessity or the use of that confidence which mankind repose in them. The question, therefore, whether these promises are binding, will depend upon this; whether mankind, upon the whole, are benefited by the confidence placed on such promises? A highwayman attacks you—and being disappointed of his booty, threatens or prepares to murder you;—you promise with many solemn asseverations, that if he will spare your life,

he shall find a purse of money left for him at a place appointed;—upon the faith of this promise, he forbears from farther violence. Now, your life was saved by the confidence reposed in a promise extorted by fear: and the lives of many others may be saved by the same. This is a good consequence. On the other hand, confidence in promises like these, greatly facilitates the perpetration of robberies: they may be made the instruments of almost unlimited extortion. This is a bad consequence: and in the question between the importance of these opposite consequences, resides the doubt concerning the obligation of such promises.

There are other cases which are plainer; as where a magistrate confines a disturber of the public peace in jail till he promise to behave better; or a prisoner of war promises, if set at liberty, to return within a certain time. These promises, say moralists, are binding, because the violence or duress is just; but the truth is, because there is the same use of confidence in these promises, as of confidence in the promises of a person at perfect liberty.

Vows are promises to God. The obligation cannot be made out upon the same principle as that of other promises. The violation of them, nevertheless, implies a want of reverence to the Supreme Being; which is enough to make it sinful.

There appears no command or encouragement in the Christian Scriptures to make vows; much less any authority to break through them when they are made. The few instances* of vows which we read of in the New Testament, were religiously observed.

The rules we have laid down concerning promises, are applicable to vows. Thus Jephtha's vow, taken in the sense in which that transaction is commonly understood, was not binding; because the performance, in that contingency, became unlawful.

CHAPTER VI.

Contracts.

A CONTRACT is a mutual promise. The obligation therefore of contracts, the sense in which they are to be interpreted, and the cases where they are not binding, will be the same as of promises.

From the principle established in the last chapter, "that the obligation of promises is to be measured by the expectation which the promiser any how voluntarily and knowingly excites," results a rule which governs the construction of all contracts, and is capable from its simplicity, of being applied with great ease and certainty, *viz.* That

Whatever is expected by one side, and known to be so expected by the other, is to be deemed a part or condition of the contract.

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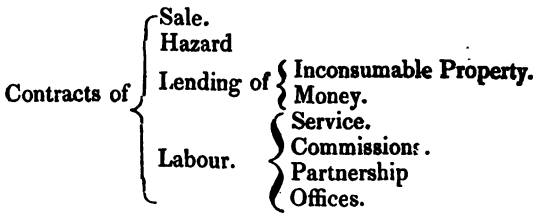
* Acts xviii. 18. xxi. 23.

The several kinds of contracts, and the order in which we propose to consider them, may be exhibited at one view, thus:



CHAPTER VII.

Contracts of sale.

THE rule of justice, which wants with most anxiety to be inculcated in the making of bargains, is, that the seller is bound in conscience to disclose the faults of what he offers to sale. Amongst other methods of proving this, one may be the following:—

I suppose it will be allowed, that to advance a direct falsehood in recommendation of our wares, by ascribing to them some quality which we know they have not, is dishonest. Now compare with this the designed concealment of some fault, which we know that they have. The motives and the effects of actions are the only points of comparison, in which their moral quality can differ; but the motive in these two cases is the same, *viz.* to procure a higher price than we expect otherwise to obtain: the effect, that is, the prejudice to the buyer, is also the same; for he finds himself equally out of pocket by his bargain, whether the commodity, when he gets home with it turns out worse than he had supposed, by the want of some quality which he expected, or the discovery of some fault which he did not expect. If therefore actions be the same, as to all moral purposes, which proceed from the same motives, and produce the same effects: it is making a distinction without a difference, to esteem it a *cheat* to magnify beyond the truth the virtues of what we have to sell, but none to conceal its faults.

It adds to the value of this kind of honesty, that the faults of many things are of a nature not to be known by any, but by the persons who have used them; so that the buyer has no security from imposition, but in the ingenuousness and integrity of the seller.

There is one exception however to this rule; namely, where the silence of the seller implies some fault in the thing to be sold, and where the buyer has a compensation in the price for the risk which he runs: as where a horse, in a London repository is sold by public auction without warranty; the want of warranty is notice of some unsoundness, and produces a proportionable abatement in the price.

To this of concealing the faults of what we want to put off, may be referred the practice of passing bad money. This practice we sometimes hear defended by a vulgar excuse, that we have taken the money

for good, and must therefore get rid of it. Which excuse is much the same as if one, who had been robbed upon the highway, should allege that he had a right to reimburse himself out of the pocket of the first traveller he met; the justice of which reasoning the traveller possibly may not comprehend.

Where there exists no monopoly or combination, the market price is always a fair price; because it will always be proportionable to the use and scarcity of the article. Hence, there need be no scruple about demanding or taking the market price; and all those expressions, "Provisions are extravagantly dear," "Corn bears an unreasonable price," and the like, import no unfairness or unreasonableness in the seller.

If your tailor or your draper charge, or even ask of you more for a suit of clothes, than the market price, you complain that you are imposed upon; you pronounce the tradesman who makes such a charge, dishonest; although, as the man's goods were his own, and he had a right to prescribe the terms upon which he would consent to part with them, it may be questioned, what dishonesty there can be in the case, or wherein the imposition consists. Whoever opens a shop, or in any manner exposes goods to public sale, virtually engages to deal with his customers at a market price; because it is upon the faith and opinion of such an engagement, that any one comes within his shop-doors, or offers to treat with him. This is expected by the buyer; is known to be so expected by the seller; which is enough, according to the rule delivered above, to make it a part of the contract between them, though not a syllable be said about it. The breach of this implied contract constitutes the fraud inquired after.

Hence, if you disclaim any such engagement, you may set what value you please upon your property. If, upon being asked to sell a house, you answer that the house suits your fancy or conveniency, and that you will not turn yourself out of it, under such a price; the price fixed may be double what the house cost, or would fetch at a public sale, without any imputation of injustice or extortion upon you.

If the thing sold be damaged, or perish between the sale and the delivery, ought the buyer to bear the loss or the seller? This will depend upon the particular construction of the contract. If the seller, either expressly, or by implication, or by custom, engage to *deliver* the goods; as if I buy a set of china, and the china-man ask me to what place he shall bring or send them, and they be broken in the conveyance, the seller must abide by the loss. If the thing sold remain with the seller, at the instance, or for the conveniency, of the buyer, then the buyer undertakes the risk; as if I buy a horse, and mention, that I will send for it on such a day (which is in effect desiring that it may continue with the seller till I do send for it), then whatever misfortune befals the horse in the mean time, must be at my cost.

And here, once for all, I would observe that innumerable questions of this sort are determined solely by *custom;* not that custom possesses any proper authority to alter or ascertain the nature of right and wrong; but because the contracting parties are presumed to include in their stipulation all the conditions which custom has annexed

to contracts of the same sort: and when the usage is notorious, and no exception made to it, this presumption is generally agreeable to the fact.*

If I order a pipe of port from a wine-merchant abroad; at what period the property passes from the merchant to me; whether upon delivery of the wine at the merchant's warehouse; upon its being put on ship-board at Oporto; upon the arrival of the ship in England; at its destined port; or not till the wine be committed to my servants, or deposited in my cellar; are all questions which admit of no decision, but what custom points out. Whence in justice, as well as law, what is called the *custom of merchants*, regulates the construction of mercantile concerns.

CHAPTER VIII.

Contracts of Hazard.

BY Contracts of Hazard, I mean gaming and insurance.

What some say of this kind of contracts, "that one side ought not to have any advantage over the other," is neither practicable nor true. It is not practicable; for that perfect equality of skill and judgment which this rule requires, is seldom to be met with. I might not have it in my power to play with fairness a game at cards, billiards, or tennis; lay a wager at a horse-race; or underwrite a policy of insurance, once in a twelvemonth, if I must wait till I meet a person, whose art, skill and judgment, in these matters, is neither greater nor less than my own. Nor is this equality requisite to the justice of the contract. One party may give to the other the whole of the stake, if he please, and the other party may justly accept it, if it be given him; much more therefore may one give to the other a part of the stake; or, what is exactly the same thing, an advantage in the chance of winning the whole.

The proper restriction is, that neither side have an advantage, by means of which the other is not aware; for this is an advantage taken, without being *given*. Although the event be still an uncertainty, your advantage in the chance has a certain value; and so much of the stake as that value amounts to, is taken from your adversary without his knowledge, and therefore without his consent. If I sit down to a game at whist, and have an advantage over the adversary, by means of a better memory, closer attention, or a superior knowledge of the rules and chances of the game, the advantage is fair; because it is obtained by means of which the adversary is aware: for he is aware when he sits down with me, that I shall

* It happens here, as in many cases, that what the parties ought to do, and what a judge or arbitrator would award to be done, may be very different. What the parties ought to do by virtue of their contract depends upon their consciousness at the time of making it: whereas a third person finds it necessary to found his judgment upon presumptions, which presumptions may be false, although the most probable that he could proceed by.

exert the skill that I possess to the utmost. But if I gain an advantage by packing the cards, glancing my eye into the adversaries' hands, or by concerted signals with my partner, it is a dishonest advantage; because it depends upon means which the adversary never suspects that I make use of.

The same distinction holds of all contracts into which chance enters. If I lay a wager at a horse-race, founded upon the conjecture I form from the appearance, and character, and breed, of the horses, I am justly entitled to any advantage which my judgment gives me: but if I carry on a clandestine correspondence with the jockeys, and find out from them, that a trial has been actually made, or that it is settled beforehand which horse shall win the race; all such information is so much fraud, because derived from sources which the other did not suspect, when he proposed or accepted the wager.

In speculations in trade, or in the stocks, if I exercise my judgment upon the general aspect and prospect of public affairs, and deal with a person who conducts himself by the same sort of judgment, the contract has all the equality in it which is necessary; but if I have access to secrets of state at home, or private advice of some decisive measure or event abroad, I cannot avail myself of these advantages with justice, because they are excluded by the contract, which proceeded upon the supposition that I had no such advantage.

In insurances, in which the underwriter computes his risk entirely from the account given by the person insured, it is absolutely necessary to the justice and validity of the contract, that this account be exact and complete.

CHAPTER IX.

Contracts of lending of inconsumable property

WHEN the identical loan is to be returned, as a book, a horse, a harpsichord, it is called *inconsumable*; in opposition to corn, wine, money, and those things which perish, or are parted with, in the use, and can therefore only be restored in kind.

The questions under this head are few and simple. The first is, if the thing lent be lost or damaged, who ought to bear the loss or damage? If it be damaged by the use, or by accident in the use, for which it was lent, the lender ought to bear it; as if I hire a job-coach, the wear, tear, and soiling, of the coach, must belong to the lender; or a horse, to go a particular journey, and in going the proposed journey, the horse die, or be lamed, the loss must be the lender's: on the contrary, if the damage be occasioned by the fault of the borrower, or by accident in some use for which it was not lent, then the borrower must make it good; as if the coach be overturned or broken to pieces by the carelessness of your coachman; or the horse be hired to take a morning's ride upon, and you go a hunting with him, or leap him over hedges, or put him into your cart or carriage, and he be strained, or staked, or galled, or accidentally hurt, or drop down dead whilst you are thus using him; you must make satisfaction to the owner.

The two cases are distinguished by this circumstance; that in one case, the owner foresees the damage or risk, and therefore consents to undertake it; in the other case he does not.

It is possible that an estate or a house may, during the term of a lease, be so increased or diminished in its value, as to become worth much more, or much less, than the rent agreed to be paid for it. In some of which cases it may be doubted, to whom, of natural right, the advantage or disadvantage belongs. The rule of justice seems to be this: If the alteration might be *expected* by the parties, the hirer must take the consequence; if it could not, the owner. An orchard, or a vineyard, or a mine, or a fishery, or a decoy, may this year yield nothing, or next to nothing, yet the tenant shall pay his rent; and if the next year produce tenfold the usual profit, no more shall be demanded; because the produce is in its nature precarious, and this variation might be expected. If an estate in the fens of Lincolnshire, or the isle of Ely, be overflowed with water, so as to be incapable of occupation, the tenant, notwithstanding, is bound by his lease; because he entered into it with a knowledge and foresight of the danger. On the other hand, if, by the irruption of the sea into a country where it was never known to have come before, by the change of the course of a river, the fall of a rock, the breaking out of a volcano, the bursting of a moss, the incursions of an enemy, or by a mortal contagion amongst the cattle; if, by means like these, an estate change, or lose its value, the loss shall fall upon the owner; that is, the tenant shall either be discharged from his agreement, or be entitled to an abatement of rent. A house in London, by the building of a bridge, the opening of a new road or street, may become of ten times its former value; and, by contrary causes, may be as much reduced in value: here also, as before, the owner, not the hirer, shall be affected by the alteration. The reason upon which our determination proceeds is this; that changes such as these, being neither foreseen, nor provided for, by the contracting parties, form no part or condition of the contract; and therefore ought to have the same effect as if no contract at all had been made (for none was made with respect to *them*), that is, ought to fall upon the owner.

CHAPTER X.

Contracts concerning the lending of money.

THERE exists no reason in the law of nature, why a man should not be paid for the lending of his money, as well as of any other property into which the money might be converted.

The scruples that have been entertained upon this head, and upon the foundation of which the receiving of interest or usury (for they formerly meant the same thing) was once prohibited in almost all Christian countries,* arose from a passage in the law of MOSES, Deutero-

* By a statute of James the First, interest above eight pounds per cent. was

nomy xxiii. 19, 20: "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury: unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury."

This prohibition is now generally understood to have been intended for the Jews alone, as part of the civil or political law of that nation, and calculated to preserve amongst themselves that distribution of property, to which many of their institutions were subservient: as the marriage of an heiress within her own tribe; of a widow who was left childless, to her husband's brother; the year of jubilee, when alienated estates reverted to the family of the original proprietor:—regulations which were never thought to be binding upon any but the commonwealth of Israel.

This interpretation is confirmed, I think, beyond all controversy, by the distinction made in the law, between a Jew and a foreigner;—"Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou mayest not lend upon usury;" a distinction which could hardly have been admitted into a law, which the Divine Author intended to be of moral and of universal obligation.

The rate of interest has in most countries been regulated by law. The Roman law allowed of twelve pounds per cent. which Justinian reduced at one stroke to four pounds. A statute of the thirteenth year of Queen Elizabeth, which was the first that tolerated the receiving of interest in England at all, restrained it to ten pounds per cent; a statute of James the First, to eight pounds; of Charles the Second to six pounds; of Queen Anne, to five pounds, on pain of forfeiture of treble the value of the money lent: at which rate and penalty the matter now stands. The policy of these regulations is, to check the power of accumulating wealth without industry: to give encouragement to trade, by enabling adventurers in it to borrow money at a moderate price; and of late years, to enable the state to borrow the subject's money itself.

Compound interest, though forbidden by the law of England, is agreeable enough to natural equity; for interest detained after it is due, becomes, to all intents and purposes, part of the sum lent.

It is a question which sometimes occurs, how money borrowed in one country ought to be paid in another, where the relative value of the precious metals is not the same. For example, suppose I borrow a hundred guineas in London, where each guinea is worth one-and-twenty shillings, and meet my creditor in the East-Indies, where a guinea is worth no more perhaps than nineteen; is it a satisfaction of the debt to return a hundred guineas, or must I make up so many times one-and-twenty shillings? I should think the latter; for it must be presumed, that my creditor, had he not lent me his guineas, would have disposed of them in such a manner, as to have now had, in the place of them, so many one-and-twenty shillings; and the question supposes that he neither intended, nor ought to be a sufferer, by parting with the possession of his money to me.

When the relative value of coin is altered by an act of the state, if the alteration would have extended to the identical pieces which were

prohibited (and consequently under that rate allowed), with this sage provision, *That this statute shall not be construed or expounded to allow the practice of usury in point of religion or conscience.*

lent, it is enough to return an equal number of pieces of the same denomination, or their present value in any other. As, if guineas were reduced by act of parliament to twenty shillings, so many twenty shillings, as I borrowed guineas, would be a just repayment. It would be otherwise, if the reduction was owing to a debasement of the coin; for then respect ought to be had to the comparative value of the old guinea and the new.

Whoever borrows money is bound in conscience to repay it. This, every man can see; but every man cannot see, or does not however reflect, that he is, in consequence, also bound to use the means necessary to enable himself to repay it. "If he pay the money when he has it, or has it to spare, he does all that an honest man can do," and all, he imagines, that is required of him; whilst the previous measures, which are necessary to furnish him with that money, he makes no part of his care, nor observes to be as much his duty as the other; such as selling a family-seat or a family-estate; contracting his plan of expense, laying down his equipage, reducing the number of his servants, or any of those humiliating sacrifices, which justice requires of a man in debt, the moment he perceives that he has no reasonable prospect of paying his debts without them. An expectation which depends upon the continuance of his own life, will not satisfy an honest man, if a better provision be in his power; for it is a breach of faith to subject a creditor, when we can help it, to the risk of our life, be the event what it will; that not being the security to which credit was given.

I know few subjects which have been more misunderstood, than the law which authorizes the imprisonment of insolvent debtors. It has been represented as a gratuitous cruelty, which contributed nothing to the reparation of the creditor's loss, or to the advantage of the community. This prejudice arises principally from considering the sending of a debtor to jail, as an act of private satisfaction to the creditor, instead of a public punishment. As an act of satisfaction or revenge, it is always wrong in the motive, and often intemperate and undistinguishing in the exercise. Consider it as a public punishment; founded upon the same reason, and subject to the same rules, as other punishments; and the justice of it, together with the degree to which it should be extended, and the objects upon whom it may be inflicted, will be apparent. There are frauds relating to insolvency, against which it is as necessary to provide punishment, as for any public crimes whatever: as where a man gets your money into his possession, and forthwith runs away with it; or what is little better, squanders it in vicious expenses; or stakes it at the gaming-table; in the Alley: or upon wild adventures in trade; or is conscious, at the time he borrows it, that he can never repay it; or wilfully puts it out of his power, by profuse living; or conceals his effects, or transfers them by collusion to another; not to mention the obstinacy of some debtors, who had rather rot in a jail, than deliver up their estates; for, to say the truth, the first absurdity is in the law itself, which leaves it in a debtor's power to withhold any part of his property from the claim of his creditors. The only question is, whether the punishment be properly placed in the hands of an exasperated creditor; for which it may be said, that these frauds are so subtile and

versatile, that nothing but a discretionary power can overtake them, and that no discretion is likely to be so well informed, so vigilant, or so active, as that of the creditor.

It must be remembered, however, that the confinement of a debtor in jail is a *punishment;* and that every punishment supposes a crime. To pursue, therefore, with the extremity of legal rigour, a sufferer, whom the fraud or failure of others, his own want of capacity, or the disappointments and miscarriages to which all human affairs are subject, have reduced to ruin, merely because we are provoked by our loss, and seek to relieve the pain we feel by that which we inflict, is repugnant not only to humanity, but to justice: for it is to pervert a provision of law, designed for a different and a salutary purpose, to the gratification of private spleen and resentment. Any alteration in these laws, which could distinguish the degrees of guilt, or convert the service of the insolvent debtor to some public profit, might be an improvement; but any considerable mitigation of their rigour, under colour of relieving the poor, would increase their hardships. For whatever deprives the creditor of his power of coercion, deprives him of his security; and as this must add greatly to the difficulty of obtaining credit, the poor, especially the lower sort of tradesmen, are the first who would suffer by such a regulation. As tradesmen must buy *before* they sell, you would exclude from trade two-thirds of those who now carry it on, if none were enabled to enter into it without a capital sufficient for prompt payments. An advocate, therefore, for the interests of this important class of the community, will deem it more eligible, that one out of a thousand should be sent to jail by his creditors, than that the nine hundred and ninety-nine should be straitened and embarrassed, and many of them lie idle, by the want of credit.

CHAPTER XI.

CONTRACTS OF LABOUR.

Service.

SERVICE in this country is, as it ought to be, voluntary, and by contract; and the master's authority extends no farther than the terms or equitable construction of the contract will justify.

The treatment of servants, as to diet, discipline, and accommodation, the kind and quantity of work to be required of them, the intermission, liberty, and indulgence, to be allowed them, must be determined in a great measure by custom: for where the contract involves so many particulars, the contracting parties express a few perhaps of the principal, and, by mutual understanding, refer the rest to the known custom of the country in like cases.

A servant is not bound to obey the unlawful commands of his mas-

ter; to minister, for instance, to his unlawful pleasures; or to assist him by unlawful practices in his profession; as in smuggling or adulterating the articles in which he deals. For the servant is bound by nothing but his own promise; and the obligation of a promise extends not to things unlawful.

For the same reason, the master's authority is no *justification* of the servant in doing wrong, for the servant's own promise, upon which that authority is founded, would be none.

Clerks and apprentices ought to be employed entirely in the profession or trade which they are intended to learn. Instruction is their hire; and to deprive them of the opportunities of instruction, by taking up their time with occupations foreign to their business, is to defraud them of their wages.

The master is responsible for what a servant does in the ordinary course of his employment; for it is done under a general authority committed to him, which is in justice equivalent to a specific direction. Thus, if I pay money to a banker's clerk, the banker is accountable; but not if I had paid it to his butler or his footman, whose business it is not to receive money. Upon the same principle, if I once send a servant to take up goods upon credit, whatever goods he afterward takes up at the same shop, so long as he continues in my service, are justly chargeable to my account.

The law of this country goes great lengths in intending a kind of concurrence in the master, so as to charge him with the consequences of his servant's conduct. If an innkeeper's servant rob his guests, the innkeeper must make restitution; if a farrier's servant lame a horse, the farrier must answer for the damage; and still farther, if your coachman or carter drive over a passenger in the road, the passenger may recover from you a satisfaction for the hurt he suffers. But these determinations stand, I think, rather upon the authority of the law, than any principal of natural justice.

There is a carelessness and facility in "giving characters," as it is called, of servants, especially when given in writing, or according to some established form, which, to speak plainly of it, is a cheat upon those who accept them. They are given with so little reserve and veracity, "that I should as soon depend," says the author of the Rambler, "upon an acquittal at the Old Bailey, by way of recommendation of a servant's honesty, as upon one of these characters." It is sometimes carelessness and sometimes also to get rid of a bad servant without the uneasiness of a dispute; for which nothing can be pleaded but the most ungenerous of all excuses, that the person whom we deceive is a stranger.

There is a conduct the reverse of this, but more injurious, because the injury falls where there is no remedy; I mean the obstructing of a servant's advancement, because you are unwilling to spare his service. To stand in the way of your servant's interest, is a poor return for his fidelity: and affords slender encouragement for good behaviour, in this numerous and therefore important part of the community. It is a piece of injustice which, if practised towards an equal, the law of honour would lay hold of; as it is, it is neither uncommon nor disreputable.

A master of a family is culpable, if he permit any vices among

his domestics, which he might restrain by due discipline, and a proper interference. This results from the general obligation to prevent misery when in our power; and the assurance which we have, that vice and misery at the long run go together. Care to maintain in his family a sense of virtue and religion, received the divine approbation in the person of ABRAHAM, Gen. xviii. 19:—"I know him, that he will command his children, and *his household* after him; and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment." And indeed no authority seems so well adapted to this purpose, as that of masters of families; because none operates upon the subjects of it with an influence so immediate and constant.

What the Christian Scriptures have delivered concerning the relation and reciprocal duties of masters and servants, breathes a spirit of liberality, very little known in ages when servitude was slavery; and which flowed from a habit of contemplating mankind under the common relation in which they stand to their Creator, and with respect to their interest in another existence: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling; in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; *with good will, doing service as to the Lord, and not to men:* knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall be received of the LORD, whether he be bond or free. And ye masters, do the same thing unto them, forbearing threatening; *knowing that your master also is in heaven:* neither is there respect of persons with him."* The idea of referring their service to God, of considering *him* as having appointed them their task, that they were doing *his* will, and were to look to *him* for their reward, was new; and affords a greater security to the master than any inferior principle, because it tends to produce a steady and cordial obedience, in the place of that constrained service, which can never be trusted out of sight, and which is justly enough called eye-service. The exhortation to masters, to keep in view their own subjection and accountableness, was no less seasonable.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTRACTS OF LABOUR.

Commissions.

WHOEVER undertakes another man's business makes it his own, that is, promises to employ upon it the same care, attention, and diligence, that he would do if it were actually his own: for he knows that the business was committed to him with that expectation. And he promises nothing more than this. Therefore an agent is not obliged to wait, inquire, solicit, ride about the country, toil, or study,

* Eph. vi. 5—9.

whilst there remains a possibility of benefiting his employer. If he exert so much of his activity, and use such caution, as the value of the business, in his judgment, deserves; that is, as he would have thought sufficient if the same interest of his own had been at stake, he has discharged his duty, although it should afterward turn out, that by more activity and longer perseverance, he might have concluded the business with greater advantage.

This rule defines the duty of factors, stewards, attorneys, and advocates.

One of the chief difficulties of an agent's situation is, to know how far he may depart from his instructions, when, from some change or discovery in the circumstances of his commission he sees reason to believe that his employer, if he were present, would alter his intention. The latitude allowed to agents in this respect, will be different, according as the commission was confidential or ministerial; and according as the general rule and nature of the service require a prompt and precise obedience to orders, or not. An attorney, sent to treat for an estate, if he found out a flaw in the title, would desist from proposing the price he was directed to propose; and very properly. On the other hand, if the commander-in-chief of an army detach an officer under him upon a particular service, which service turns out more difficult, or less expedient, than was supposed, insomuch that the officer is convinced that his commander, if he were acquainted with the true state in which the affair is found, would recall his orders, yet must this officer, if he cannot wait for fresh directions without prejudice to the expedition he is sent upon, pursue, at all hazards, those which he brought out with him.

What is trusted to an agent, may be lost or damaged in his hands by *misfortune*. An agent who acts without pay, is clearly not answerable for the loss; for, if he give his labour for nothing, it cannot be presumed that he gave also security for the success of it. If the agent be hired to the business, the question will depend upon the apprehension of the parties at the time of making the contract: which apprehension of theirs must be collected chiefly from custom, by which probably it was guided. Whether a public carrier ought to account for goods sent by him; the owner or master of a ship for the cargo; the post-office for letters, or bills enclosed in letters, where the loss is not imputed to any fault or neglect of theirs; are questions of this sort. Any expression which by implication amounts to a promise, will be binding upon the agent, without custom; as where the proprietors of a stage-coach advertise that they will *not* be accountable for money, plate, or jewels, this makes them accountable for every thing else; or where the price is too much for the labour, part of it may be considered as a premium for insurance. On the other hand, any caution on the part of the owner to guard against danger, is evidence that he considers the risk to be his; as cutting a bank-bill in two, to send by the post at different times.

Universally, unless a *promise*, either express or tacit, can be proved against the agent, the loss must fall upon the owner.

The agent may be a sufferer in his own person or property by the business which he undertakes, as where one goes a journey for another and lames his horse, or is hurt himself by a fall upon the road:

can the agent in such case claim a compensation for the misfortune? Unless the same be provided for by express stipulation, the agent is not entitled to any compensation from his employer on that account; for where the danger is not foreseen, there can be no reason to believe that the employer engaged to indemnify the agent against it: still less where it is foreseen; for whoever knowingly undertakes a dangerous employment, in common construction, takes upon himself the danger and the consequences; as where a fireman undertakes for a reward to rescue a box of writings from the flames; or a sailor to bring off a passenger from a ship in a storm.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONTRACTS OF LABOUR.

Partnership.

I KNOW nothing upon the subject of partnership that requires explanation, but in what manner the profits are to be divided, where one partner contributes money, and the other labour; which is a common case.

Rule. From the stock of the partnership deduct the sum advanced, and divide the remainder between the monied partner, and the labouring partner, in the proportion of the interest of the money to the wages of the labourer, allowing such a rate of interest as money might be borrowed for upon the same security, and such wages as a journeyman would require for the same labour and trust.

Example. A advances a thousand pounds, but knows nothing of the business; B produces no money, but has been brought up to the business, and undertakes to conduct it. At the end of the year the stock and the effects of the partnership amount to twelve hundred pounds; consequently there are two hundred pounds to be divided. Now, nobody would lend money upon the event of the business succeeding, which is A's security, under six per cent;—therefore A must be allowed sixty pounds for the interest of his money. B. before he engaged in the partnership, earned thirty pounds a year in the same employment; his labour therefore ought to be valued at thirty pounds: and the two hundred pounds must be divided between the partners in the proportion of sixty to thirty; that is, A must receive one hundred and thirty-three pounds six shillings and eightpence, and B sixty-six pounds thirteen shillings and four-pence.

If there be nothing gained, A loses his interest, and B his labour; which is right. If the original stock be diminished, by this rule B loses only his labour, as before; whereas A loses his interest, and part of the principal; for which eventual disadvantage A is compensated, by having the interest of his money computed at six per cent in the division of the profits, when there are any.

It is true, that the division of the profit is seldom forgotten in the constitution of the partnership, and is therefore commonly settled by

express agreements: but these agreements, to be equitable, should pursue the principle of the rule here laid down.

All the partners are bound to what any one of them does in the course of the business; for, *quoad hoc*, each partner is considered as an authorized agent for the rest.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONTRACTS OF LABOUR.

Offices.

IN many offices, as schools, fellowships of colleges, professorships of the universities, and the like, there is a twofold contract; one with the founder, the other with the electors.

The contract with the founder obliges the incumbent of the office to discharge every duty appointed by the charter, statutes, deed of gift, or will of the founder; because the endowment was given, and consequently accepted, for that purpose, and upon those conditions.

The contract with the electors extends this obligation to all duties that have been *customarily* connected with and reckoned a part of the office, though not prescribed by the founder; for the electors expect from the person they choose, all the duties which his predecessors have discharged; and as the person elected cannot be ignorant of their expectation, if he meant to have refused this condition, he ought to have apprised them of his objection.

And here let it be observed, that the electors can excuse the conscience of the person elected, from this last class of duties alone; because this class results from a contract to which the electors and the person elected are the only parties. The other class of duties results from a different contract.

It is a question of some magnitude and difficulty, what offices may be conscientiously supplied by a deputy.

We will state the several objections to the substitution of a deputy; and then it will be understood, that a deputy may be allowed in all cases to which these objections do not apply.

An office may not be discharged by deputy.

1. Where a particular confidence is reposed in the judgment and conduct of the person appointed to it; as the office of a steward, guardian, judge, commander in chief by land or sea.

2. Where the custom hinders; as in the case of schoolmasters, tutors, and of commissions in the army or navy.

3. Where the duty cannot, from its nature, be so well performed by a deputy; as the deputy-governor of a province may not possess the legal authority, or the actual influence, of his principal.

4. When some inconveniency would result to the service in general from the permission of deputies in such cases; for example, it is probable that military merit would be much discouraged, if the duties belonging to commissions in the army were generally allowed to be executed by substitutes.

The non-residence of the parochial clergy, who supply the duty of their benefices by curates, is worthy of a more distinct consideration. And in order to draw the question upon this case to a point, we will suppose the officiating curate to discharge every duty which his principal, were he present, would be bound to discharge, and in a manner equally beneficial to the parish; under which circumstances the only objection to the absence of the principal, at least the only one of the foregoing objections, is the last.

And, in my judgment, the force of this objection will be much diminished, if the absent rector or vicar be, in the mean time, engaged in any function or employment of equal, or of greater, importance to the general interest of religion. For the whole revenue of the national church may properly enough be considered as a common fund for the support of the national religion; and if a clergyman be serving the cause of Christianity and Protestantism, it can make little difference, out of what particular portion of this fund, that is, by the tithes and glebe of what particular parish, his service be requited; any more than it can prejudice the king's service, that an officer who has signalized his merit in America, should be rewarded with the government of a fort or castle in Ireland, which he never saw; but for the custody of which, proper provision is made, and care taken.

Upon the principle thus explained, this indulgence is due to none more than to those who are occupied in cultivating or communicating religious knowledge, or the sciences subsidiary to religion.

This way of considering the revenues of the church as a common fund for the same purpose, is the more equitable, as the value of particular preferments bears no proportion to the particular charge or labour.

But when a man draws upon this fund, whose studies and employments bear no relation to the object of it, and who is no farther a minister of the Christian religion, than as a cockade makes a soldier, it seems a misapplication little better than a robbery.

And to those who have the management of such matters I submit this question, whether the impoverishment of the fuud, by converting the best share of it into *annuities* for the gay and illiterate youth of great families, threatens not to starve and stifle the little clerical merit that is left among us.

All legal dispensations from residence proceed upon the supposition, that the absentee is detained from his living by some engagement of equal or of greater public importance. Therefore, if, in a case where no such reason can with truth be pleaded, it be said that this question regards a right of property, and that all right of property awaits the disposition of law; that, therefore, if the law, which gives a man the emoluments of a living, excuse him from residing upon it, he is excused in conscience; we answer, that the law does not excuse him *by intention*, and that all other excuses are fraudulent.

CHAPTER. XV.

Lies.

A LIE is a breach of promise: for whoever seriously addresses his discourse to another, tacitly promises to speak the truth, because he knows the truth is expected.

Or the obligation of veracity may be made out from the direct ill consequences of lying to social happiness. Which consequences consist, either in some specific injury to particular individuals, or in the destruction of that confidence which is essential to the intercourse of human life; for which latter reason, a lie may be pernicious in its general tendency, and therefore criminal, though it produce no particular or visible mischief to any one.

There are falsehoods which are not lies; that is, which are not criminal: as,

1. Where no one is deceived; which is the case in parables, fables, novels, jests, tales to create mirth, ludicrous embellishments of a story, where the declared design of the speaker is not to inform, but to divert; compliments in the subscription of a letter, a servant's *denying* his master, a prisoner's pleading not guilty, an advocate asserting the justice, or his belief of the justice, of his client's cause. In such instances, no confidence is destroyed, because none was reposed; no promise to speak the truth is violated, because none was given, or understood to be given.

2. Where the person to whom you speak has no right to know the truth, or, more properly, where little or no inconveniency results from the want of confidence in such cases; as where you tell a falsehood to a madman, for his own advantage: to a robber, to conceal your property; to an assassin, to defeat or divert him from his purpose. The particular consequence is by this supposition beneficial; and, as to the general consequence, the worst that can happen is, that the madman, the robber, the assassin, will not trust you again; which (beside that the first is incapable of deducing regular conclusions from having been once deceived, and the last two are not likely to come a second time in your way) is sufficiently compensated by the immediate benefit which you propose by the falsehood.

It is upon this principle, that by the laws of war, it is allowed to deceive an enemy by feints, false colours,* spies, false intelligence, and the like; but by no means in treaties, truces, signals of capitulation or surrender: and the difference is, that the former suppose hostilities to continue, the latter are calculated to terminate or suspend them. In the *conduct* of war, and whilst the war continues, there is no use, or rather no place, for confidence betwixt the con-

* There have been two or three instances of late, of English ships decoying an enemy into their power, by counterfeiting signals of distress; an artifice which ought to be reprobated by the common indignation of mankind! for, a few examples of captures effected by this stratagem, would put an end to that promptitude in affording assistance to ships in distress, which is the best virtue in a seafaring character, and by which the perils of navigation are diminished to all.—A. D. 1775.

tending parties; but in whatever relates to the *termination* of war the most religious fidelity is expected, because without it wars could not cease, nor the victors be secure, but by the entire destruction of the vanquished.

Many people indulge, in serious discourse, a habit of fiction and exaggeration, in the accounts they give of themselves, of their acquaintance, or of the extraordinary things which they have seen or heard; and so long as the facts they relate are indifferent, and their narratives, though false, are inoffensive, it may seem a superstitious regard to truth to censure them merely for truth's sake.

In the first place, it is almost impossible to pronounce beforehand, with certainty, concerning any lie, that it is inoffensive. *Volat irrevocabile;* and collects sometimes accretions in its flight, which entirely change its nature. It may owe possibly its mischief to the officiousness or misrepresentation of those who circulate it; but the mischief is, nevertheless, in some degree chargeable upon the original editor.

In the next place, this liberty in conversation defeats its own end. Much of the pleasure, and all the benefit, of conversation, depends upon our opinion of the speaker's veracity; for which this rule leaves no foundation. The faith indeed of a hearer must be extremely perplexed, who considers the speaker, or believes that the speaker considers himself, as under no obligation to adhere to truth, but according to the particular importance of what he relates.

But beside and above both these reasons, *white* lies always introduce others of a darker complexion. I have seldom known any one who deserted truth in trifles, that could be trusted in matters of importance. Nice distinctions are out of the question, upon occasions which, like those of speech, return every hour. The habit, therefore, of lying, when once formed, is easily extended, to serve the designs of malice or interest; like all habits it spreads indeed of itself.

Pious frauds as they are improperly enough called, pretended inspirations, forged books, counterfeit miracles, are impositions of a more serious nature. It is possible, that they may sometimes, though seldom, have been set up and encouraged, with a design to do good: but the good they aim at, requires that the belief of them should be perpetual, which is hardly possible; and the detection of the fraud is sure to disparage the credit of all pretensions of the same nature. Christianity has suffered more injury from this cause, than from all other causes put together.

As there may be falsehoods which are not lies, so there may be lies without literal or direct falsehood. An opening is always left for this species of prevarication, when the literal and grammatical signification of a sentence is different from the popular and customary meaning. It is the wilful deceit that makes the lie; and we wilfully deceive, when our expressions are not true in the sense in which we believe the hearer to apprehend them; besides that it is absurd to contend for any sense of words, in opposition to usage; for all senses of all words are founded upon usage, and upon nothing else.

Or a man may *act* a lie: as by pointing his finger in a wrong direc

tion, when a traveller inquires of him his road; or when a tradesman shuts up his windows, to induce his creditors to believe that he is abroad; for, to all moral purposes, and therefore as to veracity, speech and action are the same: speech being only a mode of action.

Or lastly, there may be lies of *omission*. A writer of English history, who, in his account of the reign of Charles the First, should wilfully suppress any evidence of that prince's despotic measures and designs, might be said to lie; for, by entitling his book, a *History of England*, he engages to relate the whole truth of the history, or at least, all that he knows of it.

CHAPTER XVI.

Oaths.

I. *Forms of oaths.*
II. *Signification.*
III. *Lawfulness.*
IV. *Obligation.*
V. *What oaths do not bind.*
VI. *In what sense oaths are to be interpreted.*

I. THE forms of oaths, like other religious ceremonies, have in all ages been various: consisting however, for the most part, of some bodily action,* and of a prescribed form of words. Amongst the Jews, the Juror held up his right hand towards heaven, which explains a passage in the 144th Psalm; "Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and *their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*" The same form is retained in Scotland still. Amongst the same Jews an oath of fidelity was taken, by the servant's putting his hand under the thigh of his Lord, as Eliezer did to Abraham, Gen. xxiv. 2.; from whence, with no great variation, is derived perhaps the form of doing homage at this day, by putting the hands between the knees, and within the hands, of the liege.

Amongst the Greeks and Romans, the form varied with the subject and occasion of the oath. In private contracts, the parties took hold of each other's hand, whilst they swore to the performance; or they touched the altar of the god by whose divinity they swore. Upon more solemn occasions, it was the custom to slay a victim; and the beast being *struck down* with certain ceremonies and invocations, gave birth to the expressions τεμνειν ορκον, *ferire pactum*: and to our English phrase, translated from these, of "striking a bargain."

The forms of oaths in Christian countries are also very different;

* It is commonly thought that oaths are denominated *corporal* oaths from the bodily action which accompanies them, of laying the right hand upon a book containing the four Gospels. This opinion, however, appears to be a mistake, for the term is borrowed from the ancient usage of touching, on these occasions, the *corporale*, or cloth which covered the consecrated elements.

but in no country in the world, I believe, worse contrived, either to convey the meaning, or impress the obligation of an oath, than in our own. The juror with us, after repeating the promise or affirmation which the oath is intended to confirm, adds, "So help me God:" or more frequently the substance of the oath is repeated to the juror by the officer or magistrate who administers it, adding in the conclusion, "So help you God." The energy of the sentence resides in the particle *so*; *so*, that is *hâc lege*, upon condition of my speaking the truth, or performing this promise, and not otherwise, may God help me. The juror, whilst he hears or repeats the words of the oath, holds his right hand upon a Bible, or other book containing the four Gospels. The conclusion of the oath sometimes runs, "Ita me Deus adjuvet, et hæc sancta evangelia," or "So help me God, and the contents of this book;" which last clause forms a connexion between the words and action of the juror, that before was wanting. The juror then kisses the book: the kiss, however, seems rather an act of reverence to the contents of the book (as, in the popish ritual, the priest kisses the Gospel before he reads it), than any part of the oath.

This obscure and elliptical form, together with the levity and frequency with which it is administered, has brought about a general inadvertency to the obligation of oaths; which, both in a religious and political view, is much to be lamented: and it merits public consideration, whether the requiring of oaths on so many frivolous occasions, especially in the Customs, and in the qualification for petty offices, has any other effect, than to make them cheap in the minds of the people. A pound of tea cannot travel regularly from the ship to the consumer, without costing half a dozen oaths at the least; and the same security for the due discharge of their office, namely, that of an oath, is required from a churchwarden and an archbishop, from a petty constable and the chief-justice in England. Let the law continue its own sanctions, if they be thought requisite; but let it spare the solemnity of an oath. And where, from the want of something better to depend upon, it is necessary to accept men's own word or own account, let it annex to prevarication penalties proportioned to the public mischief of the offence.

II. But whatever be the form of an oath, the *signification* is the same. It is "the calling upon God to witness *i. e.* to take notice of, what we say," and it is "invoking his vengeance, or renouncing his favour, if what we say be false, or what we promise be not performed."

III. Quakers and Moravians refuse to swear upon any occasion: founding their scruples concerning the *lawfulness* of oaths upon our Saviour's prohibition, Matt. v. 34: "I say unto you, Swear not at all."

The answer which we give to this objection cannot be understood, without first stating the whole passage; "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, Swear not all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou

canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea: Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil."

To reconcile with this passage of Scripture the practice of swearing, or of taking oaths, when required by law, the following observations must be attended to:

1. It does not appear, that swearing, "by heaven," "by the earth," "by Jerusalem," or "by their own head," was a form of swearing ever made use of amongst the Jews in judicial oaths: and consequently, it is not probable that they were judicial oaths which Christ had in his mind when he mentioned those instances.

2. As to the seeming universality of the prohibition, "Swear not at all," the emphatic clause, "not at all," is to be read in connexion with what follows, "not at all," *i. e.* neither "by heaven," nor by "the earth," nor "by Jerusalem," nor "by thy head;" "*not at all*," does not mean upon no occasion, but by none of these forms. Our Saviour's argument seems to suppose, that the people to whom he spake, made a distinction between swearing directly by the "name of God, and swearing by those inferior objects of veneration, "the heavens," "the earth" "Jerusalem," or "their own head." In opposition to which distinction, he tells them, that on account of the relation which these things bore to the Supreme Being, to swear by any of them, was in effect and substance to swear by *him;* "by heaven, for it is his throne; by the earth, for it is his footstool; by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; by thy head, for it is *his* workmanship, not *thine*,—thou canst not make one hair white or black:" for which reason he says "Swear *not at all*," that is, neither directly by God, nor indirectly by any thing related to him. This interpretation is greatly confirmed by a passage in the twenty-third chapter of the same Gospel, where a similar distinction, made by the Scribes and Pharisees, is replied to in the same manner.

3. Our Saviour himself being "adjured by the living God," to declare whether he was the Christ, the Son of God," or not, condescended to answer the high-priest, without making any objection to the oath (for such it was) upon which he examined him,—"*God is my witness*," says St. Paul to the Romans, "that without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers:" and to the Corinthians still more strongly, "*I call God for a record upon my soul*, that to spare you, I came not as yet to Corinth." Both these expressions contain the nature of oaths. The epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the custom of swearing judicially, without any mark of censure or disapprobation: "Men verily swear by the greater; and an oath, for confirmation, is to them an end of all strife."

Upon the strength of these reasons, we explain our Saviour's words to relate, not to judicial oaths, but to the practice of vain, wanton, and unauthorized swearing in common discourse. St. James's words, chap. v. 12, are not so strong as our Saviour's, and therefore admit the same explanation with more ease.

IV. Oaths are nugatory, that is, carry with them no *proper* force or obligation, unless we believe that God will punish false swearing with more severity than a simple lie, or breach of promise: for which belief there are the following reasons:

1. Perjury is a sin of greater deliberation. The juror has the

thought of God and of religion upon his mind at the time; at least, there are very few who can shake them off entirely. He offends, therefore, if he do offend, with a high hand; in the face, that is, and in defiance, of the sanctions of religion. His offence implies a disbelief or contempt of God's knowledge, power, and justice; which cannot be said of a lie, where there is nothing to carry the mind to any reflection upon the Deity or the Divine attributes at all.

2. Perjury violates a superior confidence. Mankind must trust to one another: and they have nothing better to trust to than one another's oath. Hence legal adjudications, which govern and affect every right and interest on this side of the grave, of necessity proceed and depend upon oaths. Perjury, therefore, in its general consequence, strikes at the security of reputation, property, and even of life itself. A lie cannot do the same mischief, because the same credit is not given to it.*

3. God directed the Israelites to swear by his name;† and was pleased, "in order to shew the immutability of his own counsel,"‡ to confirm his covenant with that people by an oath; neither of which it is probable he would have done, had he not intended to represent oaths as having some meaning and effect beyond the obligation of a bare promise; which effect must be owing to the severer punishment with which he will vindicate the authority of oaths.

V. Promissory oaths are *not binding* where the promise itself would not be so: for the several cases of which, see the Chapter of Promises.

VI. As oaths are designed for the security of the imposer, it is manifest, that they must be *interpreted* and performed in the sense in which the imposer intends them; otherwise, they afford no security to *him*. And this is the meaning and reason of the rule, "jurare in animum imponentis;" which rule the reader is desired to carry along with him, whilst we proceed to consider certain particular oaths, which are either of greater importance, or more likely to fall in our way, than others.

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* Except, indeed, where a Quaker's or Moravian's affirmation is accepted in the place of an oath: in which case, a lie partakes, so far as this reason extends, of the nature and guilt of perjury.

† Deut. vi. 13. x. 20.

‡ Heb. vi. 17.

CHAPTER XVII.

Oath in Evidence.

THE witness swears "to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, touching the matter in question."

Upon which it may be observed, that the designed concealment of any truth, which relates to the matter in agitation, is as much a violation of the oath, as to testify a positive falsehood; and this, whether the witness be interrogated as to that particular point or not. For when the person to be examined is sworn upon a *voir dire*, that is, in order to inquire whether he ought to be admitted to give evidence in the cause at all, the form runs thus: "You shall true answer make to all such questions as shall be asked you:" but when he comes to be sworn *in chief*, he swears "to speak the whole truth," without restraining it, as before, to the questions that shall be asked: which difference shews, that the law intends, in this latter case, to require of the witness, that he give a complete and unreserved account of what he knows of the subject of the trial, whether the questions proposed to him reach the extent of his knowledge or not. So that if it be inquired of the witness afterward, why he did not inform the court so and so, it is not a sufficient, though a very common answer, to say, "Because it was never asked me."

I know but one exception to this rule; which is, when a full discovery of the truth tends to accuse the witness himself of some legal crime. The law of England constrains no man to become his own accuser; consequently imposes the oath of testimony with this tacit reservation. But the exception must be confined to *legal* crimes. A point of honour, of delicacy, or of reputation, may make a witness backward to disclose some circumstance with which he is acquainted; but will in nowise justify his concealment of the truth, unless it could be shewn, that the law which imposes the oath, intended to allow this indulgence to such motives. The exception of which we are speaking, is also withdrawn by a compact between the magistrate and the witness, when an accomplice is admitted to give evidence against the partners of his crime.

Tenderness to the prisoner, although a specious apology for concealment, is no just excuse: for if this plea be thought sufficient, it takes the administration of penal justice out of the hands of judges and juries, and makes it depend upon the temper of prosecutors and witnesses.

Questions may be asked, which are irrelative to the cause, which affect the witness himself, or some third person; in which, and in all cases where the witness doubts of the pertinency and propriety of the question, he ought to refer his doubts to the court. The answer of the court, in relaxation of the oath, is authority enough to the witness: for the law which imposes the oath, may remit what it will of the obligation: and it belongs to the court to declare what the mind of the law is. Nevertheless, it cannot be said universally, that the answer of the court is conclusive upon the conscience of the witness; for his obligation depends upon what he apprehended, at the

ime of taking the oath, to be the design of the law in imposing it, and no after-requisition or explanation by the court can carry the obligation beyond that.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Oath of Allegiance.

"I DO sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful, and bear true *allegiance* to his Majesty King GEORGE." Formerly the oath of allegiance ran thus: "I do promise to be true and faithful to the king and his heirs, and truth and faith to bear, of life and limb, and terrene honour; and not to know or hear of any ill or damage intended him, without defending him therefrom;" and was altered at the Revolution to the present form. So that the present oath is a relaxation of the old one. And as the oath was intended to ascertain, not so much the extent of the subject's obedience, as the person to whom it was due, the legislature seems to have wrapped up its meaning upon the former point, in a word purposely made choice of for its general and indeterminate signification.

It will be most convenient to consider, first, what the oath, excludes as inconsistent with it; secondly, what it permits.

1. The oath excludes all intention to support the claim or pretensions of any other person or persons to the crown and government, than the reigning sovereign. A Jacobite, who is persuaded of the Pretender's right to the crown, and who moreover designs to join with the adherents to that cause to assert this right, whenever a proper opportunity, with a reasonable prospect of success, presents itself, cannot take the oath of allegiance: or, if he could, the oath of abjuration follows, which contains an express renunciation of all opinions in favour of the claim of the exiled family.

2. The oath excludes all design, at the time, of attempting to depose the reigning prince, for any reason whatever. Let the justice of the Revolution be what it would, no honest man could have taken even the present oath of allegiance to James the Second, who entertained, at the time of taking it, a design of joining in the measures which were entered into to dethrone him.

3. The oath forbids the taking up of arms against the reigning prince, with views of private advancement, or from motives of personal resentment or dislike. It is possible to happen in this, what frequently happens in despotic governments, that an ambitious general, at the head of the military force of the nation, might, by a conjuncture of fortunate circumstances, and a great ascendancy over the minds of the soldiery, depose the prince upon the throne, and make way to it for himself, or for some creature of his own. A person in this situation would be withholden from such an attempt by the oath of allegiance, if he paid regard to it. If there were any who engaged in the rebellion of the year forty-five, with the expectation of titles, estates, or preferment; or because they were disappointed, and thought themselves neglected and ill-used at court; or because

they entertained a family animosity, or personal resentment, against the king, the favourite, or the minister;—if any were induced to take up arms by these motives, they added to the many crimes of an unprovoked rebellion, that of wilful and corrupt perjury. If, in the late American war, the same motives determined others to connect themselves with that opposition, their part in it was chargeable with perfidy and falsehood to their oath, whatever was the justice of the opposition itself, or however well founded their own complaints might be of private injury.

We are next to consider what the oath of allegiance permits, or does not require.

1. It permits resistance to the king, when his ill behaviour or imbecility is such, as to make resistance beneficial to the community. It may fairly be presumed that the Convention Parliament, which introduced the oath in its present form, did not intend, by imposing it, to exclude all resistance, since the members of that legislature had many of them recently taken up arms against James the Second, and the very authority by which they sat together was itself the effect of a successful opposition to an acknowledged sovereign. Some resistance therefore was meant to be allowed; and if any, it must be that which has the public interest for its object.

2. The oath does not require obedience to such commands of the King as are unauthorized by law. No such obedience is implied by the terms of the oath; the *fidelity* there promised, is intended of fidelity in opposition to his enemies, and not in opposition to law; and *allegiance*, at the utmost, can only signify obedience to lawful commands. Therefore, if the king should issue a proclamation, levying money, or imposing any service or restraint upon the subject beyond what the crown is empowered by law to enjoin, there would exist no sort of obligation to obey such a proclamation, in consequence of having taken the oath of allegiance.

3. The oath does not require that we should continue our allegiance to the king, after he is actually and absolutely deposed, driven into exile, carried away captive, or otherwise rendered incapable of exercising the regal office, whether by his fault or without it. The promise of allegiance implies, and is understood by all parties to suppose, that the person to whom the promise is made continues king: continues, that is, to exercise the power, and afford the protection, which belongs to the office of king: for it is the possession of this power, which makes such a particular person the object of the oath; without it, why should I swear allegiance to this man rather than to any man in the kingdom? Beside which, the contrary doctrine is burdened with this consequence, that every conquest, revolution of government, or disaster which befals the person of the prince, must be followed by perpetual and irremediable anarchy.

CHAPTER XIX.

Oath against Bribery in the Election of Members of Parliament.

"I DO swear, I have not received, or had, by myself, or any person whatsoever in trust for me, or for my use and benefit, directly or indirectly, any sum or sums of money, office, place, or employment, gift, or reward, or any promise or security, for any money, office, employment, or gift, in order to give my vote at this election."

The several contrivances to evade this oath, such as the electors accepting money under colour of borrowing it, and giving a promissory note or other security, for it, which is cancelled after the election, receiving money from a stranger, or a person in disguise, or out of a drawer, or purse, left open for the purpose: or promises of money to be paid after the election; or stipulating for a place, living, or other private advantage of any kind; if they escape the legal penalties of perjury, incur the moral guilt: for they are manifestly within the mischief and design of the statute which imposes the oath, and within the terms indeed of the oath itself: for the word "indirectly" is inserted on purpose to comprehend such cases as these.

CHAPTER XX.

Oath against Simony.

FROM an imaginary resemblance between the purchase of a benefice, and Simon Magus's attempt to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts viii. 19.), the obtaining of ecclesiastical preferment by pecuniary considerations has been termed *Simony*.

The sale of advowsons is inseparable from the allowance of private patronage; as patronage would otherwise devolve to the most indigent, and for that reason the most improper hands it could be placed in. Nor did the law ever intend to prohibit the passing of advowsons from one patron to another; but to restrain the patron, who possesses the right of presenting at the vacancy, from being influenced in the choice of his presentee, by a bribe or benefit to himself. It is the same distinction with that which obtains in a freeholder's vote for his representative in parliament. The right of voting, that is, the freehold to which the right pertains, may be bought and sold as freely as any other property; but the exercise of that right, the vote itself, may not be purchased, or influenced by money.

For this purpose, the law imposes upon the presentee, who is generally concerned in the simony, if there be any, the following oath: "I do swear, that I have made no *simoniacal* payment, contract, or promise, directly or indirectly, by myself, or by any other to my knowledge, or with my consent, to any person or persons whatsoever, for or concerning the procuring and obtaining of this ecclesiastical place, &c.; nor will at any time hereafter, perform, or satisfy, any such kind of payment, contract, or promise, made by any other without my knowledge or consent: So help me God, through Jesus Christ!"

It is extraordinary that Bishop Gibson should have thought this oath to be against all promises whatsoever, when the terms of the oath expressly restrain it to *simoniacal* promises; and the law alone must pronounce what promises, as well as what payments and contracts, are simoniacal, and consequently come within the oath; and what do not so.

Now the law adjudges to be simony,—

1. All payments, contracts, or promises, made by any person, for a benefice *already vacant*. The advowson of a void turn, by law, cannot be transferred from one patron to another; therefore, if the void turn be procured by money, it must be by a pecuniary influence upon the then subsisting patron in the choice of his presentee, which is the very practice the law condemns.

2. A clergyman's purchasing of the *next turn* of a benefice *for himself*, "directly or indirectly," that is, by himself, or by another person with his money. It does not appear that the law prohibits a clergyman from purchasing the perpetuity of a patronage, more than any other person: but purchasing the perpetuity, and forthwith selling it again with a reservation of the next turn, and with no other design than to possess himself of the next turn, is *in fraudem legis*, and inconsistent with the oath.

3. The procuring of a piece of preferment, by ceding to the patron any rights, or probable rights, belonging to it. This is simony of the worst kind; for it is not only buying preferment, but robbing the succession to pay for it.

4. Promises to the patron of a portion of the profit, of a remission of tithes and dues, or other advantage out of the produce of the benefice: which kind of compact is a pernicious condescension in the clergy, independent of the oath; for it tends to introduce a practice, which may very soon become general, of giving the revenue of churches to the lay patrons, and supplying the duty by indigent stipendiaries.

5. General bonds of resignation, that is, bonds to resign upon demand.

I doubt not but that the oath against simony is binding upon the consciences of those who take it, though I question much the expediency of requiring it. It is very fit to debar public patrons, such as the king, the lord-chancellor, bishops, ecclesiastical corporations, and the like, from this kind of traffic: because from them may be expected some regard to the qualifications of the persons whom they promote. But the oath lays a snare for the integrity of the clergy: and I do not perceive, that the requiring of it in cases of private patronage produces any good effect sufficient to compensate for this danger

Where advowsons are holden along with manors or other principal estates, it would be an easy regulation to forbid that they should ever hereafter be separated; and would, at least, keep church-preferment out of the hands of brokers.

CHAPTER XXI.

Oaths to observe Local Statutes.

MEMBERS of colleges in the Universities, and of other ancient foundations, are required to swear to the observance of their respective statutes; which observance is become in some cases unlawful, in others impracticable, in others useless, in others inconvenient.

Unlawful directions are countermanded by the authority which made them unlawful.

Impracticable directions are dispensed with by the necessity of the case.

The only question is, how far the members of these societies may take upon themselves to judge of the *inconveniency* of any particular direction, and make that a reason for laying aside the observation of it.

The *animus imponentis*, which is the measure of the juror's duty, seems to be satisfied, when nothing is omitted, but what, from some change in the circumstances under what it was prescribed, it may fairly be presumed that the founder himself would have dispensed with.

To bring a case within this rule, the *inconveniency* must.

1. Be manifest; concerning which there is no doubt.

2. It must arise from some change in the circumstances of the institution; for, let the inconveniency be what it will, if it existed at the time of the foundation, it must be presumed that the founder did not deem the avoiding of it of sufficient importance to alter his plan.

3. The direction of the statute must not only be inconvenient in the general (for so may the institution itself be), but prejudicial to the particular end proposed by the institution: for it is this last circumstance which proves that the founder would have dispensed with it in pursuance of his own purpose.

The statutes of some colleges forbid the speaking of any language but Latin, within the walls of the college; direct that a certain number, and not fewer than that number, be allowed the use of an apartment amongst them; that so many hours of each day, be employed in public exercises, lectures or disputations; and some other articles of discipline adapted to the tender years, of the students who in former times resorted to universities. Were colleges to retain such rules, nobody now a-days would come near them. They are laid aside therefore, though parts of the statutes, and as such included within the oath, not merely because they are inconvenient, but because there is sufficient reason to believe, that the founders themselves would have dispensed with them as subversive of their own designs.

CHAPTER XXII.

Subscription to Articles of Religion.

SUBSCRIPTION to articles of religion, though no more than a *declaration* of the subscriber's assent, may properly enough be considered in connexion with the subject of oaths, because it is governed by the same rule of interpretation:

Which rule is the *animus imponentis*

The inquiry, therefore, concerning subscription will be, *quis imposuit, et quo animo.*

The bishop who receives the subscription, is not the imposer, any more than the crier of a court, who administers the oath to the jury and witnesses, is the person that imposes it; nor, consequently, is the private opinion or interpretation of the bishop of any signification to the subscriber, one way or other.

The compilers of the Thirty-nine Articles are not to be considered as the imposers of subscription, any more than the framer or drawer up of a law is the person that enacts it.

The legislature of the 13 Eliz. is the imposer, whose intention the subscriber is bound to satisfy.

They who contend, that nothing less can justify subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them, must suppose, that the legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession, not to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds. It is difficult to conceive how this could be expected by any, who observed the incurable diversity of human opinion upon all subjects short of demonstration.

If the authors of the law did not intend this, what did they intend?

They intended to exclude from offices in the church.

1. All abettors of Popery:

2. Anabaptists; who were at that time a powerful party on the Continent.

3. The Puritans; who were hostile to an episcopal constitution: and in general the members of such leading sects or foreign establishments as threatened to overthrow our own.

Whoever finds himself comprehended within these descriptions, ought not to subscribe. Nor can a subscriber to the Articles take advantage of any latitude which our rule may seem to allow, who is not first convinced that he is truly and substantially satisfying the intention of the legislature.

During the present state of ecclesiastical patronage, in which private individuals are permitted to impose teachers upon parishes with which they are often little or not at all connected, some limitation of the patron's choice may be necessary to prevent unedifying contentions between neighbouring teachers, or between the teachers and their respective congregations. But this danger, if it exist, may be provided against with equal effect, by converting the articles of faith into articles of peace.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Wills.

THE fundamental question upon this subject is, whether Wills are of natural or of adventitious right? That is, whether the right of directing the disposition of property after his death belongs to a man in a state of nature, and by the law of nature, or whether it be given him entirely by the positive regulations of the country he lives in?

The immediate produce of each man's personal labour, as the tools, weapons, and utensils, which he manufactures, the tent, or hut that he builds, and perhaps the flocks and herds which he breeds and rears, are as much his own as the labour was which he employed upon them, that is, are his property naturally and absolutely; and consequently he may give or leave them to whom he pleases, there being nothing to limit the continuance of his right, or to restrain the alienation of it.

But every other species of property, especially property in land, stands upon a different foundation.

We have seen, in the Chapter upon Property, that, in a state of nature, a man's right to a particular spot of ground arises from his using it, and his wanting it; consequently ceases with the use and want; so that at his death the estate reverts to the community, without any regard to the last owner's will, or even any preference of his family, farther than as they become the first occupiers, after him, and succeed to the same want and use.

Moreover, as natural rights cannot, like rights created by act of parliament, expire at the end of a certain number of years; if the testator have a right by the law of nature, to dispose of his property one moment after his death, he has the same right to direct the disposition of it for a million of ages after him; which is absurd.

The ancient apprehensions of mankind upon the subject were conformable to this account of it: for, wills have been introduced into most countries by a positive act of the state; as by the Laws of Solon into Greece; by the Twelve Tables into Rome; and that not till after a considerable progress had been made in legislation, and in the economy of civil life. Tacitus relates, that amongst the Germans they were disallowed; and what is more remarkable, in this country, since the Conquest, lands could not be devised by will, till within little more than two hundred years ago, when this privilege was restored to the subject, by an act of Parliament, in the latter end of the reign of Henry the Eighth.

No doubt, many beneficial purposes are attained by extending the owner's power over his property beyond his life, and beyond his natural right. It invites to industry; it encourages marriage; it secures the dutifulness and dependency of children: but a limit must be assigned to the duration of this power. The utmost extent to which, in any case, entails are allowed by the laws of England to operate, is during the lives in existence at the death of the testator, and one-and-twenty years beyond these; after which, there are ways and means of setting them aside.

From the consideration that wills are the creatures of the municipal law which gives them their efficacy, may be deduced a determination of the question, whether the intention of the testator in an *informal* will be binding upon the conscience of those, who, by operation of law, succeed to his estate. By an *informal* will, I mean a will void in law for want of some requisite formality, though no doubt be entertained of its meaning or authenticity: as, suppose a man make his will, devising his freehold estate to his sister's son, and the will be attested by two only, instead of three, subscribing witnesses; would the brother's son, who is heir-at-law to the testator, be bound in conscience to resign his claim to the estate, out of deference to his uncle's intention? or, on the contrary, would not the devisee under the will be bound, upon discovery of this flaw in it, to surrender the estate, suppose he had gained possession of it, to the heir at law?

Generally speaking, the heir-at-law is not bound by the intention of the testator: for the intention can signify nothing, unless the person intending have a right to govern the descent of the estate. That is the first question. Now this right the testator can only derive from the law of the land: but the law confers the right upon certain conditions, with which conditions he has not complied; therefore, the testator can lay no claim to the power which he pretends to exercise, as he hath not entitled himself to the benefit of that law, by virtue of which alone the estate ought to attend his disposal. Consequently, the devisee under the will, who, by concealing this flaw in it, keeps possession of the estate, is in the situation of any other person who avails himself of his neighbour's ignorance to detain from him his property. The will is so much waste paper, from the defect of right in the person who made it. Nor is this catching at an expression of law to pervert the substantial design of it: for I apprehend it to be the deliberate mind of the legislature, that no will should take effect upon real estates, unless authenticated in the precise manner which the statute describes. Had testamentary dispositions been founded in any natural right, independent of positive constitutions, I should have thought differently of this question: for then I should have considered the law rather as refusing its assistance to enforce the right of the devisee, than as extinguishing or working any alteration in the right itself.

And after all, I should choose to propose a case, where no consideration of pity to distress, of duty to a parent, or of gratitude to a benefactor, interfered with the general rule of justice.

The regard due to kindred in the disposal of our fortune (except the case of lineal kindred, which is different) arises either from the respect we owe to the presumed intention of the ancestor from whom we received our fortunes, or from the expectations which we have encouraged The intention of the ancestor is presumed with greater certainty, as well as entitled to more respect, the fewer degrees he is removed from us; which makes the difference in the different degrees of kindred.

For instance, it may be presumed to be a father's intention and desire, that the inheritance which he leaves, after it has served the turn and generation of one son, should remain a provision for the families *of his* other children, equally related and dear to him as the oldest.

Whoever, therefore, without cause, gives away his patrimony from his brother's or sister's family, is guilty not so much of an injury to them, as of ingratitude to his parent. The deference due from the possessor of a fortune to the presumed desire of his ancestor, will also vary with this circumstance: whether the ancestor earned the fortune by his personal industry, acquired it by accidental successes, or only transmitted the inheritance which he received.

Where a man's fortune is acquired by himself, and he has done nothing to excite expectation, but rather has refrained from those particular attentions which tend to cherish expectation, he is perfectly disengaged from the force of the above reasons, and at liberty to leave his fortune to his friends, to charitable or public purposes, or to whom he will: the same blood, proximity of blood, and the like, are merely modes of speech, implying nothing real, nor any obligation of themselves.

There is always, however, a reason for providing for our poor relations in preference to others who may be equally necessitous, which is, that if we do not, no one else will; mankind by an established consent, leaving the reduced branches of good families to the bounty of their wealthy alliances.

The not making a will, is a very culpable omission where it is attended with the following effects: where it leaves daughters, or younger children, at the mercy of the oldest son; where it distributes a personal fortune equally amongst the children, although there be no equality in their exigencies, or situations; where it leaves an opening for litigation; or lastly, and principally, where it defrauds creditors; for, by a defect in our laws, which has been long and strangely overlooked, real estates are not subject to the payment of debts by simple contract, unless made so by will; although credit is, in fact, generally given to the possession of such estates: he, therefore, who neglects to make the necessary appointments for the payment of his debts, as far as his effects extend, sins, as it has been justly said, in his grave; and if he omits this on purpose to defeat the demands of his creditors, he dies with a deliberate fraud in his heart.

Anciently when any one died without a will, the bishop of the diocese took possession of his personal fortune, in order to dispose of it for the benefit of his soul, that is, to pious or charitable uses. It became necessary, therefore, that the bishop should be satisfied of the authenticity of the will, when there was any, before he resigned the right which he had to take possession of the dead man's fortune in case of intestacy. In this way wills, and controversies relating to wills, came within the cognizance of ecclesiastical courts; under the jurisdiction of which, wills of personals (the only wills that were made formerly) still continue, though in truth no more now a-days connected with religion, than any other instruments of conveyance. This is a peculiarity in the English law.

Succession to *intestates* must be regulated by positive rules of law, there being no principle of natural justice whereby to ascertain the proportion of the different claimants; not to mention that the claim itself, especially of collateral kindred, seems to have little foundation in the law of nature.

These regulations should be guided by the duty and presumed in-

clination of the deceased, so far as these considerations can be consulted by general rules. The statutes of Charles the Second, commonly called the statutes of Distribution, which adopt the rule of the Roman law in the distribution of personals, are sufficiently equitable. They assign one-third to the widow, and two-thirds to the children; in case of no children, one-half to the widow, and the other half to the next of kin, where neither widow, nor lineal descendants survive, the whole to the next of kin, and to be equally divided amongst kindred of equal degree, without distinction of whole blood and half blood, or of consanguinity by the father's or mother's side.

The descent of real estates, of houses, that is, and land, having been settled in more remote and in ruder times, is less reasonable. There never can be much to complain of in a rule which every person may avoid, by so easy a provision as that of making his will: otherwise, our law, in this respect is chargeable with some flagrant absurdities; such as, that an estate shall in no wise go to the brother or sister of the half blood, though it came to the deceased from the common parent; that it shall go to the remotest relation the intestate has in the world, rather than to his own father or mother; or even be forfeited for want of an heir, though both parents survive; that the most distant paternal relation shall be preferred to an uncle, or own cousin, by the mother's side, notwithstanding the estate was purchased and acquired by the intestate himself.

Land not being so divisible as money, may be a reason for making a difference in the course of inheritance; but there ought to be no difference but what is founded upon that reason. The Roman law made none.

BOOK III.

PART II.

RELATIVE DUTIES WHICH ARE INDETERMINATE.

CHAPTER I.

Charity.

I USE the term Charity neither in the common sense of bounty to the poor, nor in St. Paul's sense of benevolence to all mankind; but I apply it at present in a sense more commodious to my purpose, to signify *the promoting the happiness of our inferiors.*

Charity, in this sense, I take to be the principal province of virtue and religion; for, whilst worldly prudence will direct our behaviour towards our superiors, and politeness towards our equals, there is little beside the consideration of duty, or an habitual humanity which comes into the place of consideration, to produce a proper conduct towards those who are beneath us, and dependant upon us.

There are three principal methods of promoting the happiness of our inferiors.

1. By the treatment of our domestics and dependants.
2. By professional assistance.
3. By pecuniary bounty.

CHAPTER II.

CHARITY.

The treatment of our domestics and dependants.

A PARTY of friends setting out together upon a journey, soon found it to be the best for all sides, that while they are upon the road, one of the company should wait upon the rest; another ride forward to seek out lodging and entertainment; a third carry the portmanteau; a fourth take charge of the horses; a fifth bear the purse, conduct and direct the route; not forgetting, however, that as they were equal and independent when they set out, so they are all to return to a level again at their journey's end. The same regard and respect; the same forbearance, lenity, and reserve, in using their service; the same mildness in delivering commands; the same study to make their journey comfortable and pleasant, which he whose lot it was to direct the rest, would in common decency think himself bound to observe towards them; ought we to shew to those who, in the casting of the parts of human society, happen to be placed within our power, or to depend upon us.

Another reflection of a like tendency with the former is, that our obligation to them is much greater than theirs to us. It is a mistake to suppose, that the rich man maintains his servants, tradesmen, tenants, and labourers; the truth is, they maintain him. It is their industry which supplies his table, furnishes his ward-robe, builds his houses, adorns his equipage, provides his amusements. It is not the estate, but the labour employed upon it, that pays his rent. All that he does, is to distribute what others produce; which is the least part of the business.

Nor do I perceive any foundation for an opinion, which is often handed round in genteel company, that good usage is thrown away upon low and ordinary minds: that they are insensible of kindness, and incapable of gratitude. If by "low and ordinary minds" are meant the minds of men in low and ordinary stations, they seem to be affected by benefits in the same way that all others are, and to be no less ready to requite them: and it would be a very unaccountable law of nature if it were otherwise.

Whatever uneasiness we occasion to our domestics, which neither promotes our service, nor answers the just ends of punishment, is manifestly wrong; were it only upon the general principle of diminishing the sum of human happiness.

By which rule we are are forbidden.

1. To enjoin unnecessary labour or confinement from the mere love and wantonness of domination.

2. To insult our servants by harsh, scornful, or opprobious language.

3. To refuse them any harmless pleasures.

And, by the same principle, are also forbidden causeless or immoderate anger, habitual peevishness, and groundless suspicion.

CHAPTER III.

Slavery.

THE prohibitions of the last chapter extend to the treatment of slaves, being founded upon a principle independent of the contract between masters and servants."

I define slavery to be "an obligation to labour for the benefit of the master, without the contract or consent of the servant."

This obligation may arise, consistently with the law of nature, from three causes."

1. From crimes.
2. From captivity.
3. From debt.

In the first case, the continuance of the slavery, as of any other punishment, ought to be proportioned to the crime; in the second and third cases, it ought to cease, as soon as the demand of the injured nation, or private creditor, is satisfied.

The slave-trade upon the coast of Africa is not excused by these principles. When slaves in that country are brought to market, no questions, I believe, are asked about the origin or justice of the vender's title. It may be presumed therefore, that this title is not always, if it be ever, founded in any of the causes above assigned.

But defect of right in the first purchase is the least crime with which this traffic is chargeable. The natives are excited to war and mutual depredation, for the sake of supplying their contracts, or furnishing the market with slaves. With this the wickedness begins. The slaves, torn away from parents, wives, children, from their friends and companions, their fields and flocks, their home and country, are transported to the European settlements in America, with no other accommodation on shipboard than what is provided for brutes. This is the second stage of cruelty; from which the miserable exiles are delivered, only to be placed, and that for life, in subjection to a dominion and system of laws, the most merciless and tyrannical that ever were tolerated upon the face of the earth; and from all that can be learned by the accounts of the people upon the spot, the inordinate authority which the plantation-laws confer upon the slave-holder is exercised, by the *English* slave-holder especially, with rigour and brutality.

But *necessity* is pretended; the name under which every enormity is attempted to be justified. And, after all, what is the necessity? It has never been proved that the land could not be cultivated there, as it is here, by hired servants. It is said that it could not be cultivated with quite the same conveniency and cheapness, as by the labour of slaves; by which means, a pound of sugar, which the planter now sells for sixpence, could not be afforded under sixpence halfpenny;—and this is the *necessity*.

The great revolution which has taken place in the Western World, may probably conduce (and who knows but that it was designed?) to accelerate the fall of this abominable tyranny: and now that this

contest, and the passions which attend it, are no more, there may succeed perhaps a season for reflecting, whether a legislature which had so long lent its assistance to the support of an institution replete with human misery, was fit to be trusted with an empire the most extensive that ever obtained in any age or quarter of the world.

Slavery was a part of the civil constitution of most countries, when Christianity appeared; yet no passage is to be found in the Christian Scriptures, by which it is condemned or prohibited. This is true; for Christianity, soliciting admission into all nations of the world, abstained, as behoved it, from intermeddling with the civil institutions of any. But does it follow, from the silence of Scripture concerning them, that all the civil institutions which then prevailed were right? Or that the bad should not be exchanged for better?

Besides this, the discharging of slaves from all obligation to obey their masters, which is the consequence of pronouncing slavery to be unlawful, would have had no better effect, than to let loose one-half of mankind upon the other. Slaves would have been tempted to embrace a religion, which asserted their right to freedom; masters would hardly have been persuaded to consent to claims founded upon such authority; the most calamitous of all contests, a *bellum servile*, might probably have ensued, to the reproach, if not the extinction, of the Christian name.

The truth is, the emancipation of slaves should be gradual, and be carried on by provisions of law, and under the protection of civil government. Christianity can only operate as an alterative. By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are insensibly prepared to perceive and correct the enormities, which folly, or wickedness, or accident, have introduced into their public establishments. In this way the Greek and Roman slavery, and since these, the feudal tyranny, has declined before it. And we trust that, as the knowledge and authority of the same religion advance in the world, they will banish what remains of this odious institution.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARITY.

Professional Assistance.

THIS kind of beneficence is chiefly to be expected from members of the legislature, magistrates, medical, legal, and sacerdotal professions.

1. The care of the poor ought to be the principal object of all laws; for this plain reason, that the rich are able to take care of themselves.

Much has been, and more might be, done by the laws of this country, towards the relief of the impotent, and the protection and encouragement of the industrious, poor. Whoever applies himself

to collect observations upon the state and operation of the poor-laws, and to contrive remedies for the imperfections and abuses which he observes, and digests these remedies into acts of parliament; and conducts them, by argumen or influence, through the two branches of the legislature, or communicates his ideas to those who are more likely to carry them into effect; deserves well of a class of the community so numerous, that their happiness forms a principal part of the whole. The study and activity thus employed, is, charity, in the most meritorious sense of the word.

2. The application of parochial relief is intrusted, in the first instance, to overseers and contractors, who have an interest in opposition to that of the poor, inasmuch as whatever they allow them comes in part out of their own pocket. For this reason, the law has deposited with justices of the peace a power of superintendence and control; and the judicious interposition of this power is a most useful exertion of charity, and ofttimes within the ability of those who have no other way of serving their generation. A country gentleman of very moderate education, and who has little to spare from his fortune, by learning so much of the poor law as is to be found in Dr. Burn's Justice, and by furnishing himself with a knowledge of the prices of labour and provision, so as to be able to estimate the exigencies of a family, and what is to be expected from their industry, may, in this way, place out the one talent committed to him, to great account.

3. Of all private professions, that of medicine puts it in a man's power to do the most good at the least expense. Health, which is precious to all, is to the poor invaluable: and their complaints, as agues, rheumatisms, &c. are often such as yield to medicine. And, with respect to the expense, drugs at first hand cost little, and advice costs nothing, where it is only bestowed upon those who could not afford to pay for it.

4. The rights of the poor are not so important or intricate as their contentions are violent and ruinous. A lawyer or attorney, of tolerable knowledge in his profession, has commonly judgment enough to adjust these disputes, with all the effect, and without the expense, of a lawsuit; and he may be said to *give* a poor man twenty pounds, who prevents his throwing it away upon law. A *legal* man, whether of the profession or not, who, together with a spirit of conciliation, possesses the confidence of his neighbourhood, will be much resorted to for this purpose, especially since the great increase of costs has produced a general dread of going to law.

Nor is this line of beneficence confined to *arbitration*. Seasonable counsel, coming with the weight which the reputation of the adviser gives it, will often keep or extricate the rash and uninformed out of great difficulties.

Lastly, I know not a more exalted charity than that which presents a shield against the rapacity or persecution of a tyrant.

5. Betwixt argument and authority (I mean that authority which flows from voluntary respect, and attends upon sanctity and disinterestedness of character) something may be done, amongst the lower orders of mankind, towards the regulation of their conduct, and the satisfaction of their thoughts. This office belongs to the ministers of

religion; or rather, whoever undertakes it, becomes a minister of religion. The inferior clergy, who are nearly upon a level with the common sort of their parishioners, and who on that account gain an easier admission to their society and confidence, have in this respect more in their power than their superiors: the discreet use of this power constitutes one of the most respectable functions of human nature.

CHAPTER V.

CHARITY.

Pecuniary Bounty.

I. *The Obligation to Bestow Relief upon the Poor.*
II. *The Manner of Bestowing it.*
III. *The Pretences by which men excuse themselves from it.*

I. *The Obligation to Bestow Relief upon the Poor.*

THEY who rank pity amongst the original impulses of our nature, rightly contend, that, when this principle prompts us to the relief of human misery, it indicates the Divine intention, and our duty. Indeed, the same conclusion is deducible from the existence of the passion, whatever account be given of its origin. Whether it be an instinct or a habit, it is in fact a property of our nature, which God appointed; and the final cause for which it was appointed, is to afford to the miserable, in the compassion of their fellow-creatures a remedy for those inequalities and distresses which God foresaw that many must he exposed to, under every general rule for the distribution of property.

Beside this, the poor have a claim founded in the law of nature, which may be thus explained:—All things were originally common. No one being able to produce a charter from Heaven, had any better title to a particular possession than his next neighbour. There were reasons for mankind's agreeing upon a separation of this common fund; and God for these reasons is presumed to have ratified it. But this separation was made and consented to, upon the expectation and condition that every one should have left a sufficiency for his subsistence, or the means of procuring it; and as no fixed laws for the regulation of property can be so contrived, as to provide for the relief of every case and distress which may arise, these cases and distresses, when their right and share in the common stock were given up or taken from them, were supposed to be left to the voluntary bounty of those who might be acquainted with the exigencies of their situation, and in the way of affording assistance. And, therefore, when the partition of property is rigidly maintained against the claims of indi-

gence and distress, it is maintained in opposition to the intention of those who made it, and to *his*, who is the Supreme Proprietor of every thing, and who has filled the world with plenteousness, for the sustentation and comfort of all whom he sends into it.

The Christian Scriptures are more copious and explicit upon this duty than upon almost any other. The description which Christ hath left us of the proceedings of the last day, establishes the obligation of bounty beyond controversy:—"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another.—Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.—And inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."* It is not necessary to understand this passage as a literal account of what will actually pass on that day. Supposing it only a scenical description of the rules and principles, by which the Supreme Arbiter of our destiny will regulate his decisions, it conveys the same lesson to us; it equally demonstrates of how great value and importance these duties in the sight of God are, and what stress will be laid upon them. The apostles also describe this virtue as propitiating the Divine favour in an eminent degree. And these recommendations have produced their effect. It does not appear, that, before the times of Christianity, an infirmary, hospital, or public charity of any kind, existed in the world; whereas, most countries in Christendom have long abounded with these institutions. To which may be added, that a spirit of private liberality seems to flourish amidst the decay of many other virtues; not to mention the legal provision for the poor, which obtains in this country, and which was unknown and unthought of by the most humanized nations of antiquity.

St. Paul adds upon the subject an excellent direction, and which is practicable by all who have any thing to give—"Upon the first day of the week (or any other stated time) let every one of you lay by in store, as God hath prospered him." By which I understand St. Paul to recommend what is the very thing wanting with most men, *the being charitable upon a plan;* that is, upon a deliberate comparison of our fortunes with the reasonable expenses and expectations of our families, to compute what we can spare, and to lay by so much for charitable purposes in some mode or other. The *mode* will be a consideration afterward.

The effect which Christianity produced upon some of its first converts, was such as might be looked for from a divine religion, coming with full force and miraculous evidence upon the consciences of mankind. It overwhelmed all worldly considerations in the expectation of a more important existence:—"And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of

* Matthew xxv. 31.

them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common.—Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostle's feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." Acts iv. 32.

Nevertheless, this community of goods, however it manifested the sincere zeal of the primitive Christians, is no precedent for our imitation. It was confined to the church at Jerusalem; continued not long there; was never enjoined upon any (Acts v. 4.); and, although it might suit with the particular circumstances of a small and select society, is altogether impracticable in a large and mixed community.

The conduct of the apostles upon the occasion, deserves to be noticed. Their followers laid down their fortunes at their feet; but so far were they from taking advantage of this unlimited confidence, to enrich themselves, or to establish their own authority, that they soon after got rid of this business, as inconsistent with the main object of their mission, and transferred the custody and management of the public fund to deacons elected to that office by the people at large. (Acts vi.)

II. *The manner of bestowing bounty: or the different kinds of charity.*

Every question between the different kinds of charity, supposes the sum bestowed to be the same.

There are three kinds of charity which prefer a claim to attention.

The first, and in my judgment one of the best, is to give stated and considerable sums, by way of pension, or annuity, to individuals or families, with whose behaviour and distress we ourselves are acquainted. When I speak of *considerable* sums, I mean only that five pounds, or any other sum, given at once, or divided amongst five or fewer families, will do more good than the same sum distributed amongst a greater number in shillings or half-crowns; and that, because it is more likely to be properly applied by the persons who receive it. A poor fellow, who can find no better use for a shilling than to drink his benefactor's health, and purchase half an hour's recreation for himself, would hardly break into a guinea for any such purpose, or be so improvident as not to lay it by for an occasion of importance, *e. g.* for his rent, his clothing, fuel, or stock of winter's provision. It is a still greater recommendation of this kind of charity that pensions and annuities, which are paid regularly, and can be expected at the time, are the only way by which we can prevent one part of a poor man's sufferings—the *dread* of want.

2. But as this kind of charity supposes that proper objects of such expensive benefactions fall within our private knowledge and observation, which does not happen to all, a second method of doing good, which is, in every one's power who has the money to spare, is by subscription to public charities. Public charities admit of this argument in their favour, that your money goes farther towards attaining the end for which it is given, than it can do by any private and separate beneficence. A guinea, for example, contributed to an infirmary, be-

comes the means of providing one patient at least with a physician, surgeon, apothecary, with medicine, diet, lodging, and suitable attendance; which is not the tenth part of what the same assistance, if it could be procured at all, would cost to a sick person or family in any other situation.

3. The last, and, compared with the former, the lowest exertion of benevolence, is in the relief of beggars. Nevertheless, I by no means approve the indiscriminate rejection of all who implore our alms in this way. Some may perish by such a conduct. Men are sometimes overtaken by distress, for which all other relief would come too late. Beside which, resolutions of this kind compel us to offer such violence to our humanity, as may go near, in a little while, to suffocate the principle itself; which is a very serious consideration. A good man, if he do not surrender himself to his feelings without reserve, will at last lend an ear to importunities which come accompanied with outward attestations of distress; and after a patient audience of the complaint, will direct himself, not so much by any previous resolution which he may have formed upon the subject, as by the circumstances and credibility of the account that he receives.

There are other species of charity well contrived to make the money expended *go far*: such as keeping down the price of fuel or provision, in case of monoply or temporary scarcity, by purchasing the articles at the best market, and retailing them at prime cost, or at a small loss; or the adding of a bounty to particular species of labour, when the price is accidentally depressed.

The proprietors of large estates have it in their power to facilitate the maintenance, and thereby to encourage the establishment, of families (which is one of the noblest purposes to which the rich and great can convert their endeavours), by building cottages, splitting farms, erecting manufactories, cultivating wastes, embanking the sea, draining marshes, and other expedients, which the situation of each estate points out. If the profits of these undertakings do not repay the expense, let the authors of them place the difference to the account of charity. It is true of almost all such projects, that the public is a gainer by them, whatever the owner be. And where the loss can be spared, this consideration is sufficient.

It is become a question of some importance, under what circumstances works of charity ought to be done in private, and when they may be made public without detracting from the merit of the action, if indeed they ever may; the Author of our religion having delivered a rule upon this subject which seems to enjoin universal secrecy:—"When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly." (Matt. vi. 3, 4.) From the preamble to this prohibition I think it, however, plain, that our Saviour's sole design was to forbid *ostentation*, and all publishing of good works which proceeds from that motive:—"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, *to be seen of them*; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven; therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, *that they may have glory of men*. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward."

—ver. 1, 2. There are motives for the doing our alms in public, beside those of *ostentation*, with which therefore our Saviour's rule has no concern: such as to testify our approbation of some particular species of charity, and to recommend it to others; to take off the prejudice, which the want, or, which is the same thing, the suppression, of our name in the list of contributors might excite against the charity, or against ourselves. And so long as these motives are free from any mixture of vanity, they are in no danger of invading our Saviour's prohibition; they rather seem to comply with another direction which he has left us: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." If it be necessary to propose a precise distinction upon the subject, I can think of none better than the following: when our bounty is *beyond* our fortune and station, that is, when it is more than could be expected from us, our charity should be private, if privacy be practicable: when it is not more than might be expected, it may be public: for we cannot hope to influence others by the imitation of *extraordinary* generosity, and therefore want, in the former case, the only justifiable reason for making it public.

Having thus described several different exertions of charity, it may not be improper to take notice of a species of liberality, which is not *charity*, in any sense of the word; I mean the giving of entertainments or liquor, for the sake of popularity: or the rewarding, treating, and maintaining the companions of our diversions, as hunters, shooters, fishers, and the like. I do not say, that this is criminal; I only say that it is not charity; and that we are not to suppose, because we *give*, and give to the *poor*, that it will stand in the place, or supersede the obligation, of more meritorious and disinterested bounty.

III. *The pretences by which men excuse themselves from giving to the poor.*

1. "That they have nothing to spare," *i. e.* nothing for which they have not provided some other use: nothing which their plan of expense, together with the savings they have resolved to lay by, will not exhaust; never reflecting whether it be in their *power*, or that it is their *duty*, to retrench their expenses, and contract their plan, "that they may have to give to them that need:" or rather, that this ought to have been part of their plan originally.

2. "That they have families of their own, and that charity begins at home." The extent of this plea will be considered, when we come to explain the duty of parents.

3. "That charity does not consist in giving money, but in benevolence, philanthrophy, love to all mankind, goodness of heart," &c. Hear St. James: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding *ye give them not those things which are needful to the body:* what doth it profit?" (James ii. 15, 16.)

4. "That giving to the poor is not mentioned in St. Paul's description of charity, in the thirteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians." This is not a description of charity, but of good-nature; and it is not necessary that every duty be mentioned in every place.

5. "That they pay the poor-rates." They might as well allege that they pay their debts: for the poor have the same right to that portion of a man's property, which the laws assign to them, that the man himself has to the remainder.

6. "That they employ many poor persons:"—for their own sake, not the poor's;—otherwise it is a good plea.

7. "That the poor do not suffer so much as we imagine; that education and habit have reconciled them to the evils of their condition, and make them easy under it." Habit can never reconcile human nature to the extremities of cold, hunger, and thirst, any more than it can reconcile the hand to the touch of a red-hot iron; besides, the question is not, how unhappy any one is, but how much more happy we can make him.

8. "That these people, give them what you will, will never thank you, or think of you for it." In the first place, this is not true: in the second place, it was not for the sake of their thanks that you relieved them.

9. "That we are liable to be imposed upon." If a due inquiry be made, our merit is the same: beside that the distress is generally real, although the cause be untruly stated.

10. "That they should apply to their parishes." This is not always practicable: to which we may add, that there are many requisites to a comfortable subsistence, which parish relief does not supply; and that there are some, who would suffer almost as much from receiving parish relief as by the want of it; and, lastly, that there are many modes of charity to which this answer does not relate at all.

11. "That giving money, encourages idleness and vagrancy. This is true only of injudicious and indiscriminate generosity.

12. "That we have too many objects of charity at home, to bestow any thing upon strangers; or, that there are other charities, which are more useful, or stand in greater need." The value of this excuse depends entirely upon the *fact*, whether we actually relieve those neighbouring objects, and contribute to those other charities.

Beside all these excuses, pride, or prudery, or delicacy, or love of ease, keep one-half of the world out of the way of observing what the other half suffer.

CHAPTER VI.

Resentment.

RESENTMENT may be distinguished into *anger* and *revenge*.

By *anger*, I mean the pain we suffer upon the receipt of an injury or affront, with the usual effects of that pain upon ourselves.

By *revenge*, the inflicting of pain upon the person who has injured or offended us, farther than the just ends of punishment or reparation require.

Anger prompts to revenge; but it is possible to suspend the effect when we cannot altogether quell the principle. We are bound also to

endeavour to qualify and correct the principle itself. So that our duty requires two different applications of the mind; and, for that reason anger and revenge may be considered separately.

CHAPTER VII.

Anger.

"Be ye angry, and sin not;" therefore all anger is not sinful: I suppose, because some degree of it, and upon some occasions, is inevitable.

It becomes sinful or contradicts, however, the rule of Scripture, when it is conceived upon slight and inadequate provocations, and when it continues long.

1. When it is conceived upon slight provocations: for, "charity suffereth long, is not easily provoked."—"Let every man be slow to anger." Peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, are enumerated among the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, and compose the true Christian temper, as to this article of duty.

2. When it continues long! for, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

These precepts, and all reasoning indeed on the subject, suppose the passion of anger to be within our power; and this power consists not so much in any faculty we possess of appeasing our wrath at the time (for we are passive under the smart which an injury or affront occasions, and all we can then do, is to prevent its breaking out into action), as in so mollifying our minds by habits of just reflection, as to be less irritated by impressions of injury, and to be sooner pacified.

Reflections proper for this purpose, and which may be called the *sedatives* of anger, are the following; the possibility of mistaking the motives from which the conduct that offends us proceeded; how often *our* offences have been the effect of inadvertency, when they were construed into indications of malice; the inducement which prompted our adversary to act as he did, and how powerfully the same inducement has, at one time or other, operated upon ourselves; that he is suffering perhaps under a contrition, which he is ashamed, or wants opportunity, to confess; and how ungenerous it is to triumph by coldness or insult over a spirit already humbled in secret; that the returns of kindness are sweet, and that there is neither honour, nor virtue, nor use, in resisting them:—for, some persons think themselves bound to cherish and keep alive their indignation, when they find it dying away of itself. We may remember that others have their passions, their prejudices, their favourite aims, their fears, their cautions, their interests, their sudden impulses, their varieties of apprehension, as well as we: we may recollect what hath sometimes passed in our minds, when we have gotten on the wrong side of a quarrel, and imagine the same to be passing in our adversary's mind now; when we became sensible of our misbehaviour, what palliations we perceived in it, and expected others to perceive; how we were affected by the

kindness, and felt the superiority, of a generous reception and ready forgiveness; how persecution revived our spirits with our enmity, and seemed to justify the conduct in ourselves which we before blamed. Add to this, the indecency of extravagant anger; how it renders us, whilst it lasts, the scorn and sport of all about us, of which it leaves us, when it ceases, sensible and ashamed; the inconveniencies and irretrievable misconduct, into which our irascibility has sometimes betrayed us; the friendships it has lost us; the distresses and embarrassments in which we have been involved by it; and the sore repentance which, on one account or other, it always costs us.

But the reflection calculated above all others to allay the haughtiness of temper which is ever finding out provocations, and which renders anger so impetuous, is that which the gospel proposes; namely, that we ourselves are, or shortly shall be, suppliants for mercy and pardon at the judgment-seat of God. Imagine our secret sins disclosed and brought to light; imagine us thus humbled and exposed; trembling under the hand of God; casting ourselves on his compassion; crying out for mercy; imagine such a creature to talk of satisfaction and revenge; refusing to be entreated, disdaining to forgive; extreme to mark and to resent what is done amiss:—Imagine, I say, this, and you can hardly frame to yourself an instance of more impious and unnatural arrogance.

The point is, to habituate ourselves to these reflections, till they rise up of their own accord when they are wanted, that is, instantly upon the receipt of an injury or affront, and with such force and colouring, as both to mitigate the paroxysms of our anger at the time, and at length to produce an alteration in the temper and disposition itself.

CHAPTER VIII.

Revenge.

ALL pain occasioned to another in consequence of an offence or injury received from him, farther than what is calculated to procure reparation or promote the just ends of punishment, is so much revenge.

There can be no difficulty in knowing when we occasion pain to another; nor much in distinguishing whether we do so, with a view only to the ends of punishment, or from revenge: for, in the one case we proceed with reluctance, in the other with pleasure.

It is highly *probable* from the light of nature, that a passion, which seeks its gratification immediately and expressly in giving pain, is disagreeable to the benevolent will and counsels of the Creator. Other passions and pleasures may, and often do, produce pain to some one: but then pain is not, as it is here, the object of the passion, and the direct cause of the pleasure. This *probability* is converted into certainty, if we give credit to the Authority which dictated the several passages of the Christian Scriptures that condemn revenge, or, what is the same thing, which enjoin forgiveness.

We will set down the principal of these passages; and endeavour

to collect from them, what conduct upon the whole is allowed towards an enemy, and what is forbidden.

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him: so likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."—"Put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."—"Be patient towards all men; see that none render evil for evil to any man."—"Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

I think it evident, from some of these passages taken separately, and still more so from all of them together, that *revenge*, as described in the beginning of this chapter, is forbidden in every degree, under all forms, and upon every occasion. We are likewise forbidden to refuse to an enemy, even the most imperfect right; "if he hunger, feed him: if he thirst give him drink;"† which are examples of imperfect rights. If one who has offended us, solicit from us a vote to which his qualifications entitle him, we may not refuse it from motives of resentment, or the remembrance of what we have suffered at his hands. His right, and our obligation which follows the right, are not altered by his enmity to us, or by ours to him.

On the other hand, I do not conceive, that these prohibitions were intended to interfere with the punishment or prosecution of public offenders. In the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew, our Saviour tells his disciples; "If thy brother who has trespassed against thee neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican." Immediately after this, when St. Peter asked him, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Christ replied, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven;" that is, as often as he repeats the offence. From these two adjoining passages compared together we are authorized to conclude that the forgiveness of an enemy is not inconsistent with the proceedings against him as a public offender; and that the discipline established in religious or civil societies, for the restraint or punishment of criminals, ought to be upholden.

If the magistrate be not tied down with these prohibitions from the execution of his office, neither is the prosecutor; for the office of the prosecutor is as necessary as that of the magistrate.

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* Matt. vi. 14, 15. xviii. 34, 35. Col. iii. 12, 13. 1 Thess. v. 14. 15. Rom. xii. 19—21.

† See also Exodus, xxiii. 4. "If thou meet thine enemy's ox, or his ass, going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again: if thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt *surely help* with him."

Nor, by parity of reason, are private persons withholden from the correction of vice, when it is in their power to exercise it; provided they be assured that it is the guilt which provokes them, and not the injury; and that their motives are pure from all mixture and every particle of that spirit which delights and triumphs in the humiliation of an adversary.

Thus, it is no breach of Christian charity to withdraw our company or civility when the same tends to discountenance any vicious practice. This is one branch of that extrajudicial discipline, which supplies the defects and the remissness of law; and is expressly authorized by St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 11.); "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no not to eat." The use of this association against vice continues to be experienced in one remarkable instance, and might be extended with good effect to others. The confederacy amongst women of character, to exclude from their society kept-mistresses and prostitutes, contributes more perhaps to discourage that condition of life, and prevents greater numbers from entering into it, than all the considerations of prudence and religion put together.

We are likewise allowed to practise so much caution as not to put ourselves in the way of injury, or invite the repetition of it. If a servant or tradesman has cheated us, we are not bound to trust him again: for this is to encourage him in his dishonest practices, which is doing him much harm.

Where a benefit can be conferred only upon one or few, and the choice of the person upon whom it is conferred is a proper object of favour, we are at liberty to prefer those who have not offended us to those who have; the contrary being no where required.

Christ, who, as hath been well demonstrated,* estimated virtues by their solid utility, and not by their fashion or popularity, prefers this of the forgiveness of injuries to every other. He enjoins it oftener; with more earnestness; under a greater variety of forms; and with this weighty and peculiar circumstance, that the forgiveness of others is the condition upon which alone we are to expect, or even ask, from God, forgiveness for ourselves. And this preference is justified by the superior importance of the virtue itself. The feuds and animosities in families and between neighbours, which disturb the intercourse of human life, and collectively compose half the misery of it, have their foundation in the want of a forgiving temper; and can never cease, but by the exercise of this virtue, on one side, or on both

* See a View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.

CHAPTER IX.

Duelling.

DUELLING as a punishment, is absurd; because it is an equal chance, whether the punishment fall upon the offender, or the person offended. Nor is it much better as a reparation; it being difficult to explain in what the *satisfaction* consists, or how it tends to undo the injury, or to afford a compensation for the damage already sustained.

The truth is, it is not considered as either. A law of honour having annexed the imputation of cowardice to patience under an affront, challenges are given and accepted with no other design than to prevent or wipe off this suspicion; without malice against the adversary, generally without a wish to destroy him, or any other concern than to preserve the duellist's own reputation and reception in the world.

The unreasonableness of this rule of manners is one consideration; the duty and conduct of individuals, while such a rule exists, is another.

As to which, the proper and single question is this: whether a regard for our own reputation is, or is not, sufficient to justify the taking away the life of another?

Murder is forbidden; and wherever human life is deliberately taken away, otherwise than by public authority, there is murder. The value and security of human life make this rule necessary; for I do not see what other idea or definition of murder can be admitted, which will not let in so much private violence, as to render society a scene of peril and bloodshed.

If unauthorized laws of honour be allowed to create exceptions to Divine prohibitions, there is an end of all morality, as founded in the will of the Deity; and the obligation of every duty may, at one time or other, be discharged by the caprice and fluctuations of fashion.

"But a sense of shame is so much torture; and no relief presents itself otherwise than by an attempt upon the life of our adversary." What then? The distress which men suffer by the want of money is oftentimes extreme, and no resource can be discovered but that of removing a life which stands between the distressed person and his inheritance. The motive in this case is as urgent, and the means much the same, as in the former: yet this case finds no advocate.

Take away the circumstance of the duellist's exposing his own life, and it becomes assassination; add this circumstance, and what difference does it make? None but this, that fewer perhaps will imitate the example, and human life will be somewhat more safe, when it cannot be attacked without equal danger to the aggressor's own. Experience, however, proves that there is fortitude enough in most men to undertake this hazard; and were it otherwise, the defence, at best, would be only that which a highwayman or housebreaker might plead, whose attempt had been so daring and desperate, that few were likely to repeat the same.

In expostulating with the duellist, I all along suppose his adversary

to fall. Which supposition I am at liberty to make, because, if he have no right to kill his adversary, he has none to attempt it.

In return, I forbear from applying to the case of duelling the Christian principle of the forgiveness of injuries; because it is possible to suppose the injury to be forgiven, and the duellist to act entirely from a concern for his own reputation: where this is not the case, the guilt of duelling is manifest, and is greater.

In this view it seems unnecessary to distinguish between him who gives, and him who accepts, a challenge: for, on the one hand, they incur an equal hazard of destroying life; and on the other, both act upon the same persuasion, that what they do is necessary, in order to recover or preserve the good opinion of the world.

Public opinion is not easily controlled by civil institutions: for which reason I question whether any regulations can be contrived, of sufficient force to suppress or change the rule of honour, which stigmatizes all scruples about duelling with the reproach of cowardice.

The insufficiency of the redress which the law of the land affords, for those injuries which chiefly affect a man in his sensibility and reputation, tempts many to redress themselves. Prosecutions for such offences, by the trifling damages that are recovered, serve only to make the sufferer more ridiculous.—This ought to be remedied.

For the army, where the point of honour is cultivated with exquisite attention and refinement, I would establish a *Court of Honour*, with a power of awarding those submissions and acknowledgements, which it is generally the purpose of a challenge to obtain; and it might grow into a fashion, with persons of rank of all professions, to refer their quarrels to this tribunal.

Duelling, as the law now stands, can seldom be overtaken by legal punishment. The challenge, appointment, and other previous circumstances, which indicate the intention with which the combatants met, being suppressed, nothing appears to a court of justice but the actual rencounter; and if a person be slain when actually fighting with his adversary, the law deems his death nothing more than manslaughter.

CHAPTER X

Litigation.

"IF it be *possible*, live peaceably with all men;" which precept contains an indirect confession that is not always *possible*.

The instances* in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew are rather to be understood as proverbial methods of describing the general duties of forgiveness and benevolence, and the temper which we ought to aim at acquiring, than as directions to be specifically observed; or of themselves of any great importance to be observed. The first of these is,

* "Whoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also: and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

"If thine enemy smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also;" yet, when one of the officers struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, we find Jesus rebuking him for the outrage with becoming indignation; "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John xviii. 23.) It may be observed likewise, that the several examples are drawn from instances of small and tolerable injuries. A rule which forbade all opposition to injury, or defence against it, could have no other effect, than to put the good in subjection to the bad, and deliver one half of mankind to the depredation of the other half: which must be the case, so long as some considered themselves as bound by such a rule, whilst others despised it. St. Paul, though no one inculcated forgiveness and forbearance with a deeper sense of the value and obligation of these virtues, did not interpret either of them to require an unresisting submission to every contumely, or a neglect of the means of safety and self-defence. He took refuge in the laws of his country, and in the privileges of a Roman citizen, from the conspiracy of the Jews (Acts xxv. 11.); and from the clandestine violence of the chief captain. (Acts xxii. 25.) And yet this is the same apostle who reproved the litigiousness of his Corinthian converts with so much severity. "Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

On the one hand, therefore, Christianity excludes all vindictive motives, and all frivolous causes, of prosecution; so that where the injury is small, where no good purpose of public example is answered, where forbearance is not likely to invite a repetition of the injury, or where the expense of an action becomes a punishment too severe for the offence; there the Christian is withholden by the authority of his religion from going to law.

On the other hand, a lawsuit is inconsistent with no rule of the gospel, when it is instituted.—

1. For the establishing of some important right.
2. For the procuring a compensation for some considerable damage.
3. For the preventing of future injury.

But, since it is supposed to be undertaken simply with a view to the ends of justice and safety, the prosecutor of the action is bound to confine himself to the cheapest process which will accomplish these ends, as well as to consent to any peaceable expedient for the same purpose; as to *a reference*, in which the arbitrators can do, what the law cannot, divide the damage, when the fault is mutual; or to *a compounding of the dispute*, by accepting a compensation in the gross, without entering into articles and items, which it is often very difficult to adjust separately.

As to the rest, the duty of the contending parties may be expressed in the following directions:

Not by appeals to prolong a suit against your own conviction.

Not to undertake or defend a suit against a poor adversary, or render it more dilatory or expensive than necessary; with the hope of intimidating or wearying him out by the expense.

Not to influence *evidence* by authority or expectation;

Nor to stifle any in your possession, although it make against *you.*

Hitherto we have treated of civil actions. In criminal prosecutions, he private injury should be forgotten, and the prosecutor proceed with the same temper, and upon the same motives, as the magistrate: the one being a necessary minister of justice as well as the other, and both bound to direct their conduct by a dispassionate care of the public welfare.

In whatever degree the punishment of an offender is conducive, or his escape dangerous, to the interest of the community, in the same degree is the party against whom the crime is committed bound to prosecute, because such prosecutions must in their nature originate from the sufferer.

Therefore great public crimes, as robberies, forgeries, and the like, ought not to be spared, from an apprehension of trouble or expense in carrying on the prosecution, from false shame, or misplaced compassion.

There are many offences, such as nuisances, neglect of public roads, forestalling, engrossing, smuggling, sabbath-breaking, profaneness, drunkenness, prostitution, the keeping of lewd or disorderly houses, the writing, publishing, or exposing to sale, lascivious books or pictures, with some others, the prosecution of which, being of equal concern to the whole neighbourhood, cannot be charged as a peculiar obligation upon any.

Nevertheless, there is great merit in the person who undertakes such prosecutions upon proper motives; which amounts to the same thing.

The character of an *informer* is in this country undeservedly odious. But where any public advantage is likely to be attained by information, or other activity in promoting the execution of the laws, a good man will despise a prejudice founded in no just reason, or will acquit himself of the imputation of interested designs by giving away his share of the penalty.

On the other hand, prosecutions for the sake of the reward, or for the gratification of private enmity, where the offence produces no public mischief, or where it arises from ignorance or inadvertency, are reprobated under the general description of *applying a rule of law to a purpose for which it was not intended.* Under which description may be ranked an officious revival of the laws against Popish priests, and dissenting teachers.

CHAPTER XI.

Gratitude.

EXAMPLES of ingratitude check and discourage voluntary beneficence; and in this the mischief of ingratitude consists. Nor is the mischief small; for after all is done that can be done, towards providing for the public happiness, by prescribing rules of justice, and enforcing the observation of them by penalties or compulsion, much must be left to those offices of kindness, which men remain at liberty to exert or withhold. Now not only the choice of the objects, but the

quantity and even the existence of this sort of kindness in the world depends, in a great measure, upon the return which it receives; and this is a consideration of general importance.

A second reason for cultivating a grateful temper in ourselves, is the following: The same principle, which is touched with the kindness of a human benefactor, is capable of being affected by the Divine goodness, and of becoming, under the influence of that affection, a source of the purest and most exalted virtue. The love of God is the sublimest gratitude. It is a mistake, therefore, to imagine, that this virtue is omitted in the Christian Scriptures; for every precept which commands us "to love God, because he first loved us," presupposes the principle of gratitude, and directs it to its proper object.

It is impossible to particularize the several expressions of gratitude, inasmuch as they vary with the character and situation of the benefactor, and with the opportunities of the person obliged; which variety admits of no bounds.

It may be observed, however, that gratitude can never oblige a man to do what is wrong, and what by consequence he is previously obliged not to do. It is no ingratitude to refuse to do, what we cannot reconcile to any apprehensions of our duty; but it is ingratitude and hypocrisy together, to pretend this reason, when it is not the real one; and the frequency of such pretences has brought this apology for noncompliance with the will of a benefactor into unmerited disgrace.

It has long been accounted a violation of delicacy and generosity to upbraid men with the favours they have received; but it argues a total destitution of both these qualities, as well as of moral probity, to take advantage of that ascendancy which the conferring of benefits justly creates, to draw or drive those whom we have obliged into mean or dishonest compliances.

CHAPTER XII.

Slander.

SPEAKING is acting, both in philosophical strictness, and as to all moral purposes; for if the mischief and motive of our conduct be the same, the means which we use make no difference.

And this is in effect what our Saviour declares, Matt. xii. 37:—"By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned:" by thy words, as well, that is, as by thy actions; the one shall be taken into the account as well as the other, for they both possess the same property of voluntarily producing good or evil.

Slander may be distinguished into two kinds; *malicious* slander, and *inconsiderate* slander.

Malicious slander is the relating of either truth or falsehood, for the purpose of creating misery.

I acknowledge that the truth or falsehood of what is related, varies the degree of guilt considerably; and that slander, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, signifies the circulation of mischievous *falsehoods;* but truth may be made instrumental to the success of mali-

cious designs as well as falsehood: and if the end be bad, the means cannot be innocent.

I think the idea of slander ought to be confined to the production of *gratuitous* mischief. When we have an end or interest of our own to serve, if we attempt to compass it by falsehood, it is *fraud:* if by a publication of the truth, it is not without some additional circumstance of breach of promise, betraying of confidence, or the like, to be deemed criminal.

Sometimes the pain is intended for the person to whom we are speaking; at other times, an enmity is to be gratified by the prejudice or disquiet of a third person. To infuse suspicions, to kindle or continue disputes, to avert the favour and esteem of benefactors from their dependants, to render some one whom we dislike contemptible or obnoxious in the public opinion, are of all offices of slander; of which the guilt must be measured by the intensity and extent of the misery produced.

The disguises under which slander is conveyed, whether in a whisper, with injunctions of secrecy, by way of caution, or with affected reluctance, are all so many aggravations of the offence, as they indicate more deliberation and design.

Inconsiderate slander is a different offence, although the same mischief actually follow, and although the mischief might have been foreseen. The not being conscious of that design which we have hitherto attributed to the slanderer, makes the difference.

The guilt here consists in the want of that regard to the consequences of our conduct, which a just affection for human happiness, and concern for our duty, would not have failed to have produced in us. And it is no answer to this crimination to say, that we entertained no evil *design*. A servant may be a very bad servant, and yet seldom or never *design* to act in opposition to his master's interest or will: and his master may justly punish such servant for a thoughtlessness and neglect nearly as prejudicial as deliberate disobedience. I accuse you not, he may say, of any express intention to hurt me; but had not the fear of my displeasure, the care of my interest, and indeed all the qualities which constitute the merit of a good servant been wanting in you, they would not only have excluded every direct purpose of giving me uneasiness, but have been so far present to your thoughts, as to have checked that unguarded licentiousness by which I have suffered so much, and inspired you in its place with an habitual solicitude about the effects and tendency of what you did or said.—This very much resembles the case of all sins of inconsideration; and amongst the foremost of these, that of inconsiderate slander.

Information communicated for the real purpose of warning, or cautioning, is not slander.

Indiscriminate praise is the opposite of slander, but it is the opposite extreme; and, however it may affect to be thought excess of candour, is commonly the effusion of a frivolous understanding, or proceeds from a settled contempt of all moral duties.

BOOK III.

PART III.

OF RELATIVE DUTIES WHICH RESULT FROM THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SEXES.

THE constitution of the sexes is the foundation of *marriage.*

Collateral to the subject of marriage, are fornication, seduction adultery, incest, poligamy, divorce.

Consequential to marriage, is the relation and reciprocal duty of parent and child.

We will treat of these subjects in the following order: first, of the public use of marriage institutions; secondly, of the subjects collateral to marriage, in the order in which we have here proposed them; thirdly, of marriage itself; and, lastly, of the relation and reciprocal duties of parents and children.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Public Use of Marriage Institutions.

THE public use of marriage institutions consists in their promoting the following beneficial effects.

1. The private comfort of individuals, especially of the female sex. It may be true, that all are not interested in this reason; nevertheless, it is a reason to all for abstaining from any conduct which tends in its general consequence to obstruct marriage; for, whatever promotes the happiness of the majority, is binding upon the whole.

2. The production of the greatest number of healthy children, their better education, and the making of due provision for their settlement in life.

3. The peace of human society, in cutting off a principal source of contention, by assigning one or more women to one man, and protecting his exclusive right by sanctions of morality and law.

4. The better government of society, by distributing the community into separate families, and appointing over each the authority of a master of a family, which has more actual influence than all civil authority put together.

5. The same end, in the additional security which the state receives for the good behaviour of its citizens, from the solicitude they feel for the welfare of their children, and from their being confined to permanent habitations.

6. The encouragement of industry.

Some ancient nations appear to have been more sensible of the importance of marriage institutions than we are. The Spartans obliged their citizens to marry by penalties, and the Romans encouraged theirs by the *jus trium liberorum*. A man who had no child, was entitled by the Roman law only to one-half of any legacy that should be left him, that is, at the most, could only receive one-half of the testator's fortune.

CHAPTER II.

Fornication.

THE first and great mischief, and by consequence the guilt of promiscuous concubinage, consists in its tendency to diminish marriages, and thereby to defeat the several beneficial purposes enumerated in the preceding chapter.

Promiscuous concubinage discourages marriage, by abating the chief temptation to it. The male part of the species will not undertake the encumbrance, expense, and restraint, of a married life, if they can gratify their passions at a cheaper price; and they will undertake any thing, rather than not gratify them.

The reader will learn to comprehend the magnitude of this mischief, by attending to the importance and variety of the uses to which marriage is subservient; and by recollecting withal, that the malignity and moral quality of each crime is not to be estimated by the particular effect of one offence, or of one person's offending, but by the general tendency and consequence of crimes of the same nature. The libertine may not be conscious that these irregularities hinder his own marriage, from which he is deterred, he may allege, by different considerations; much less does he perceive how *his* indulgences can hinder other men from marrying; but what will he say would be the consequence, if the same licentiousness were universal? or what should hinder its becoming universal, if it be innocent or allowable in him?

2. Fornication supposes prostitution; and prostitution brings and leaves the victims of it to almost certain misery. It is no small quantity of misery in the aggregate, which, between want, disease, and insult, is suffered by those outcasts of human society, who infest populous cities; the whole of which is a *general consequence* of fornication, and to the increase and continuance of which every act and instance of fornication contributes.

3. Fornication* produces habits of ungovernable lewdness, which

* Of this passion it has been truly said, that "irregularity has no limits; that one excess draws on another; that the most easy, therefore, as well as the most excellent way of being virtuous, is to be so entirely." Ogden, Serm. xvi.

introduce the more aggravated crimes of seduction, adultery, violation, &c. Likewise, however it be accounted for, the criminal commerce of the sexes, corrupts and depraves the mind and moral character more than any single species of vice whatsoever. That ready perception of guilt, that prompt and decisive resolution against it, which constitutes a virtuous character, is seldom found in persons addicted to these indulgences. They prepare an easy admission for every sin that seeks it; are, in low life, usually the first stage in men's progress to the most desperate villanies; and, in high life, to that lamented dissoluteness of principle, which manifests itself in a profligacy of public conduct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and of moral probity. Add to this, that habits of libertinism incapacitate and indispose the mind for all intellectual, moral, and religious pleasures; which is a great loss to any man's happiness.

4. Fornication perpetuates a disease, which may be accounted one of the sorest maladies of human nature; and the effects of which are said to visit the constitution of even distant generations.

The passion being natural, proves that it was intended to be gratified: but under what restrictions, or whether without any, must be collected from different considerations.

The Christian Scriptures condemn fornication absolutely and peremptorily. "Out of the heart," says our Saviour, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, *fornication*, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man." These are Christ's own words: and one word from him upon the subject, is final. It may be observed with what society fornication is classed; with murders, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. I do not mean that these crimes are all equal, because they are all mentioned together; but it proves that they are all crimes. The apostles are more full upon this topic. One well known passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, may stand in the place of all others; because, admitting the authority by which the apostles of Christ spake and wrote, it is decisive; "Marriage and the bed undefiled is honourable amongst all men; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;" which was a great deal to say, at a time when it was not agreed, even amongst philosophers themselves, that fornication was a crime.

The Scriptures give no sanction to those austerities, which have been since imposed upon the world under the name of Christ's religion; as the celibacy of the clergy, the praise of perpetual virginity, the *prohibitio concubitûs cum gravidâ uxore:* but with a just knowledge of and regard to, the condition and interest of the human species, have provided, in the marriage of one man with one woman, an adequate gratification for the propensities of their nature, and have *restricted* them to that gratification.

The avowed toleration, and in some countries the licensing, taxing, and regulating, of public brothels, has appeared to the people an authorizing of fornication; and has contributed, with other causes, so far to vitiate the public opinion, that there is no practice of which the immorality is so little thought of or acknowledged, although there are few in which it can more plainly be made out. The legislators who have patronised receptacles of prostitution, ought to have foreseen this effect, as well as considered, that whatever facilitates for-

nication, diminishes marriages. And, as to the usual apology for this relaxed discipline, the danger of greater enormities, if access to prostitutes were too strictly watched and prohibited, it will be time enough to look to that when the laws and the magistrates have done their utmost. The greatest vigilance of both will do no more, than oppose some bounds and some difficulties to this intercourse. And, after all, these pretended fears are without foundation in experience. The men are in all respects the most virtuous, in countries where the women are most chaste.

There is a species of cohabitation, distinguishable, no doubt, from vagrant concubinage, and which, by reason of its resemblance to marriage, may be thought to participate of the sanctity and innocence of that estate; I mean the case of *kept-mistresses*, under the favourable circumstance of mutual fidelity. This case I have heard defended by some such apology as the following:—

"That the marriage-rite being different in different countries, and in the same country amongst different sects, and with some scarce any thing; and, moreover, not being prescribed, or even mentioned in Scripture, can be accounted for only as of a form and ceremony of human invention: that, consequently, if a man and woman betroth and confine themselves to each other, their intercourse must be the same, as to all moral purposes, as if they were legally married; for the addition or omission of that which is a mere form and ceremony, can make no difference in the sight of God, or in the actual nature of right and wrong."

To all which it may be replied,

1. If the situation of the parties be the same thing as marriage, why do they not marry?

2. If the man choose to have it in his power to dismiss the woman at his pleasure, or to retain her in a state of humiliation and dependance inconsistent with the rights which marriage would confer upon her, it is not the same thing.

It is not at any rate the same thing to the children.

Again, as to the marriage-rite being a mere form, and that also variable, the same may be said of signing and sealing of bonds, wills, deeds of conveyance, and the like, which yet make a great difference in the rights and obligations of the parties concerned in them.

And with respect to the rite not being appointed in Scripture;—the Scriptures forbid fornication, that is, cohabitation without marriage, leaving it to the law of each country to pronounce what is, or what makes, a marriage; in like manner as they forbid thefts, that is, the taking away of another's property, leaving it to the municipal law to fix what makes the thing property, or whose it is; which also, as well as marriage, depend upon arbitrary and mutable forms.

Laying aside the injunctions of Scripture, the plain account of the question seems to be this: it is immoral because it is pernicious, that men and women should cohabit, without undertaking certain irrevocable obligations, and mutually conferring certain civil rights; if, therefore, the law has annexed these right and obligations to certain forms, so that they cannot be secured or undertaken by any other means, which is the case here (for whatever the parties may promise

to each other, nothing but the marriage-ceremony can make their promise irrevocable), it becomes in the same degree immoral, that men and women should cohabit without the interposition of these forms.

If fornication be criminal, all those incentives which lead to it are accessories to the crime, as lascivious conversation, whether expressed in obscene or disguised under modest phrases; also wanton songs, pictures, books; the writing, publishing, and circulating of which, whether out of frolic, or for some pitiful profit, is productive of so extensive a mischief, from so mean a temptation, that few crimes, within the reach of private wickedness, have more to answer for, or less to plead in their excuse.

Indecent conversation, and by parity of reason all the rest, are forbidden by St. Paul, Eph. iv. 29. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth;" and again, Col. iii. 8. "Put off—filthy communication out of your mouth."

The invitation, or voluntary admission of impure thoughts, or the suffering them to get possession of the imagination, falls within the same description, and is condemned by Christ, Matt. v. 28. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Christ, by thus enjoining a regulation of the thoughts, strikes at the root of the evil.

CHAPTER III.

Seduction.

THE *seducer* practises the same stratagems to draw a woman's person into his power, that a *swindler* does to get possession of your goods, or money; yet the *law of honour*, which abhors deceit, applauds the address of a successful intrigue: so much is this capricious rule guided by names, and with such facility does it accomodate itself to the pleasures and conveniency of higher life!

Seduction is seldom accomplished without fraud; and the fraud is by so much more criminal than other frauds, as the injury effected by it is greater, continues longer, and less admits reparation.

This injury is threefold: to the woman, to her family, and to the public.

I. The injury to the woman is made up of the *pain* she suffers from shame, or the *loss* she sustains in her reputation and prospects of marriage, and of the *depravation of her moral principle.*

1. This *pain* must be extreme, if we may judge of it from those barbarous endeavours to conceal their disgrace, to which women under such circumstances, sometimes have recourse; comparing also this barbarity, with their passionate fondness for their offspring in other cases. Nothing but an agony of mind the most insupportable can induce a woman to forget her nature, and the pity which even a stranger would shew to a helpless and imploring infant. It is true

that all are not urged to this extremity; but if any are, it affords an indication of how much all suffer from the same cause. What shall we say to the authors of such mischief?

2. The *loss* which a woman sustains by the ruin of her reputation, almost exceeds computation. Every person's happiness depends in part upon the respect and reception which they meet with in the world; and it is no inconsiderable mortification even to the firmest tempers, to be rejected from the society of their equals, or received there with neglect and disdain. But this is not all, nor the worst. By a rule of life, which it is not easy to blame, and which it is impossible to alter, a woman loses with her chastity the chance of marrying at all, or in any manner equal to the hopes she had been accustomed to entertain. Now marriage, whatever it be to a man, is that from which every woman expects her chief happiness. And this is still more true in low life, of which condition the women are who are most exposed to solicitations of this sort. Add to this, that where a woman's maintenance depends upon her character, (as it does, in a great measure, with those who are to support themselves by service) little sometimes is left to the forsaken sufferer, but to starve for want of employment, or to have recourse to prostitution for food and raiment.

3. As a woman collects her virtues into this point, the loss of her chastity is generally the *destruction of her moral principle:* and this consequence is to be apprehended, whether the criminal intercourse be discovered or not.

II. The injury to the family may be understood, by the application of that infallible rule, "of doing to others what *we would* that others should do unto us."—Let a father or a brother say, for what consideration they would suffer this injury to a daughter or a sister; and whether any, or even a total, loss of fortune, could create equal affliction and distress. And when they reflect upon this, let them distinguish, if they can, between a robbery, committed upon their property by fraud or forgery, and by the ruin of their happiness by the treachery of a seducer.

III. The public at large lose the benefit of the woman's service in her proper place and destination, as a wife and parent. This, to the whole community, may be little; but it is often more than all the good which the seducer does to the community can recompense. Moreover, prostitution is supplied by seduction; and in proportion to the danger there is of the woman's betaking herself, after her first sacrifice, to a life of public lewdness, the seducer is answerable for the multiplied evils to which his crime gives birth.

Upon the whole, if we pursue the effects of seduction through the complicated misery which it occasions, and if it be right to estimate crimes by the mischief they knowingly produce, it will appear something more than mere invective to assert, that not one-half of the crimes, for which men suffer death by the laws of England, are so flagitious as this.*

* Yet the law has provided no punishment for this offence beyond a pecuniary satisfaction to the injured family; and this can only be come at by one of the quaintest fictions in the world; by the father's bringing his action against the seducer, for the loss of his daughter's service, during her pregnancy and nurturing.

CHAPTER IV.

Adultery.

A NEW sufferer is introduced, the injured husband who receives a wound in his sensibility and affections, the most painful and incurable that human nature knows. In all other respects, adultery on the part of the man who solicits the chastity of a married woman, includes the crime of seduction, and is attended with the same mischief.

The infidelity of the woman is aggravated by cruelty to her children, who are generally involved in their parents' shame, and always made unhappy by their quarrel.

If it be said that these consequences are chargeable not so much upon the crime, as the discovery, we answer, first, that the crime could not be discovered unless it were committed, and that the commission is never secure from discovery; and, secondly, that if we excuse adulterous connexions, whenever they can hope to escape detection, which is the conclusion to which this argument conducts us, we leave the husband no other security for his wife's chastity, than in her want of opportunity or temptation; which would probably either deter men from marrying, or render marriage a state of such jealousy and alarm to the husband, as must end in the slavery and confinement of the wife.

The vow, by which married persons mutually engage their fidelity, "is witnessed before God," and accompanied with circumstances of solemnity and religion, which approach to the nature of an oath. The married offender therefore incurs a crime little short of perjury, and the seduction of a married woman is little less than subornation of perjury:—and this guilt is independent of the discovery.

All behaviour which is designed, or which knowingly tends, to captivate the affections of a married woman, is a barbarous intrusion upon the peace and virtue of a family, though it fall short of adultery.

The usual and only apology for adultery is, the prior transgression of the other party. There are degrees, no doubt, in this, as in other crimes: and so far as the bad effects of adultery are anticipated by the conduct of the husband or wife who offends first, the guilt of the second offender is less. But this falls very far short of a justification; unless it could be shewn that the obligation of the marriage-vow depends upon the condition of reciprocal fidelity; for which construction there appears no foundation, either in expediency, or in the terms of the promise, or in the design of the legislature which prescribed the marriage-rite. Moreover, the rule contended for by this plea has a manifest tendency to multiply the offence, but none to reclaim the offender.

The way of considering the offence of one party as a *provocation* to the other, and the other as only *retaliating* the injury by repeating the crime, is a childish trifling with words.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery," was an interdict delivered by God himself. By the Jewish law, adultery was capital to both parties in the crime; "Even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death." *Levit. xx. 10.* Which passages prove, that the Divine Legislator placed

a great difference between adultery and fornication. And with this agree the Christian Scriptures; for, in almost all the catalogues they have left us of crimes and criminals, they enumerate "fornication, adultery, whoremongers, adulterers," (Matthew xv. 19. 1 Cor. vi. 9. Gal. v. 9. Heb. xiii. 4.); by which mention of both, they shew that they did not consider them as the same; but that the crime of adultery was, in their apprehension, distinct from, and accumulated upon, that of fornication.

The history of the woman taken in adultery, recorded in the eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel, has been thought by some to give countenance to that crime. As Christ told the woman, "Neither do I *condemn* thee," we must believe, it is said, that he deemed her conduct either not criminal, or not a crime, however, of the heinous nature which we represent it to be. A more attentive examination of the case will, I think, convince us, that from it nothing can be concluded as to Christ's opinion concerning adultery, either one way or the other. The transaction is thus related: "Early in the morning Jesus came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him: and he sat down and taught them. And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery: and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act: now, Moses, in the law, commanded that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou? This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lift up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin amongst you, let him first cast a stone at her; and again he stooped down and wrote on the ground: and they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lift up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said unto him, no man, Lord. And he said unto her, *Neither do I condemn thee:* go, and sin no more."

"This they said tempting him, that thy might have to accuse him:" to draw him, that is, into an exercise of judicial authority, that they might have to accuse him before the Roman governor, of usurping or intermeddling with the civil government. This was their design; and Christ's behaviour throughout the whole affair proceeded from a knowledge of this design, and a determination to defeat it. He gives them at first a cold and sullen reception, well suited to the insidious intention with which they came; "He stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." "When they *continued* asking him," when they teazed him to speak, he dismissed them with a rebuke, which the impertinent malice of their errand, as well as the sacred character of many of them, deserved; "He that is without sin (that is, this sin) among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This had its effect. Stung with the reproof, and disappointed of their aim, they stole away one by one, and left Jesus and the woman alone. And then follows the conversation, which is the part of the narrative most material to our present subject. "Jesus

said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more. Now, when Christ asked the woman, "Hath no man *condemned* thee?" he certainly spoke, and was understood by the woman to speak, of a legal and judicial condemnation: otherwise, her answer, "No man, Lord," was not true. In every other sense of condemnation, as blame, censure, reproof, private judgment, and the like, many had condemned her; all those indeed who brought her to Jesus. If then a judicial sentence was what Christ meant by *condemning* in the question, the common use of language requires us to suppose that he meant the same in his reply, "Neither do I condemn thee," *i. e.* I pretend to no judicial character or authority over thee; it is no office or business of mine to pronounce or execute the sentence of the law.

When Christ adds, "Go, and sin no more," he in effect tells her, that she had sinned already: but as to the degree or quality of the sin, or Christ's opinion concerning it, nothing is declared, or can be inferred, either way.

Adultery, which was punished with death during the Usurpation, is now regarded by the law of England only as a civil injury; for which the imperfect satisfaction that money can afford, may be recovered by the husband.

CHAPTER V.

Incest.

IN order to preserve chastity in families, and between persons of different sexes, brought up and living together in a state of unreserved intimacy, it is necessary by every method possible to inculcate an abhorrence of incestuous conjunctions; which abhorrence can only be upholden by the absolute reprobation of *all* commerce of the sexes between near relations. Upon this principle, the *marriage* as well as other cohabitations of brothers and sisters, of lineal kindred, and of all who usually live in the same family, may be said to be forbidden by the law of nature.

Restrictions which extend to remoter degrees of kindred than what this reason makes it necessary to prohibit from intermarriage, are founded in the authority of the positive law which ordains them, and can only be justified by their tendency to diffuse wealth, to connect families, or to promote some political advantage.

The Levitical law, which is received in this country, and from which the rule of the Roman law differs very little, prohibits* marriage between relations, within *three* degrees of kindred; computing the generations, not from, but through the common ancestor, and accounting affinity the same as consanguinity. The issue, however, of such

* The Roman law continued the prohibition to the descendants of brothers and sisters without limits. In the Levitical and English law, there is nothing to hinder a *man from* marrying his *great*-neice.

marriages are not bastardized, unless the parents be divorced during their lifetime.

The Egyptians are said to have allowed of the marriage of brothers and sisters. Amongst the Athenians, a very singular regulation prevailed: brothers and sisters of the half-blood, if related by the father's side might marry; if by the mother's side, they were prohibited from marrying. The same custom also probably obtained in Chaldea so early as the age in which Abraham left it; for he and Sarah his wife stood in this relation to each other: "And yet, indeed, she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father but not of my mother; and she became my wife." Gen. xx. 12.

CHAPTER VI.

Polygamy.

THE equality* in the number of males and females born into the world, intimates the intention of God, that one woman should be assigned to one man; for, if to one man be allowed an exclusive right to five or more women, four or more men must be deprived of the exclusive possession of any; which could never be the order intended.

It seems also a significant indication of the Divine will, that he at first created only one woman to one man. Had God intended polygamy for the species, it is probable he would have begun with it; especially as, by giving to Adam more wives than one, the multiplication of the human race would have proceeded with a quicker progress.

Polygamy not only violates the constitution of nature, and the apparent design of the Deity, but produces to the parties themselves, and to the public, the following bad effects: contests and jealousies amongst the wives of the same husband; distracted affections, or the loss of all affection, in the husband himself; a voluptuousness in the rich, which dissolves the vigour of their intellectual as well as active faculties, producing that indolence and imbecility both of mind and body, which have long characterized the nations of the East; the abasement of one half of the human species, who, in countries where polygamy obtains, are degraded into mere instruments of physical pleasure to the other half; neglect of children: and the manifold, and sometimes unnatural mischiefs, which arise from a scarcity of women. To compensate for these evils, polygamy does not offer a single advantage. In the article of population, which it has been thought to promote, the community gain nothing:† for the question

* This equality is not exact. The number of male infants exceeds that of females in the proportion of nineteen to eighteen, or thereabouts; which excess provides for the greater consumption of males by war, seafaring, and other dangerous or unhealthy occupations.

† Nothing, I mean, compared with a state in which marriage is nearly universal. Where marriages are less general, and many women unfruitful from the want of husbands, polygamy might at first add a little to population; and but a little: for as a variety of wives would be sought chiefly from temptations of voluptuousness, it

is not, whether one man will have more children by five or more wives than by one; but whether these five wives would not bear the same or a greater number of children to five separate husbands. And as to the care of the children when produced, and the sending of them into the world in situations in which they may be likely to form and bring up families of their own, upon which the increase and succession of the human species in a great degree depend; this is less provided for, and less practicable, where twenty or thirty children are to be supported by the attention and fortunes of one father, than if they were divided into five or six families, to each of which were assigned the industry and inheritance of two parents.

Whether simultaneous polygamy was permitted by the law of Moses, seems doubtful:* but whether permitted or not, it was certainly practised by the Jewish patriarchs, both before that law, and under it. The permission, if there were any, might be like that of divorce, "for the hardness of their heart," in condescension to their established indulgences, rather than from the general rectitude or propriety of the thing itself. The state of manners in Judea had probably undergone a reformation in this respect before the time of Christ, for in the New Testament we meet with no trace or mention of any such practice being tolerated.

For which reason, and because it was likewise forbidden amongst the Greeks and Romans, we cannot expect to find any express law upon the subject in the Christian code. The words of Christ† (Matt. xix. 9.) may be construed by an easy implication to prohibit polygamy: for, if "whoever putteth away his wife, and *marrieth* another, committeth adultery," he who marrieth another *without* putting away the first, is no less guilty of adultery: because the adultery does not consist in the repudiation of the first wife (for, however unjust or cruel that may be, it is not adultery), but in entering into a second marriage during the legal existence and obligation of the first. The several passages in St. Paul's writings, which speak of marriage always suppose it to signify the union of one man with one woman. Upon this supposition he argues, Rom. vii. 1—3: "Know ye not brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath a husband, is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband: so then, if while her husband liveth she be married to another man, she shall be called an adultress." When the same apostle permits marriage to his Corinthian converts (which, "for the present

would rather increase the demand for female beauty, than for the sex at large. And this *little* would soon be made less by many deductions. For, first, as none but the opulent can maintain a plurality of wives, where polygamy obtains, the rich indulge in it, while the rest take up with a vague and barren incontinency. And, secondly, women would grow less jealous of their virtue, when they had nothing for which to reserve it, but a chamber in the *haram*; when their chastity was no longer to be rewarded with the rights and happiness of a wife, as enjoyed under the marriage of one woman to one man. These considerations may be added to what is mentioned in the text, concerning the easy and early settlement of children in the world.

* See Deut. xvii. 17. xxi. 15.

† "I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, *and* shall marry another, committeth adultery.

distress," he judges to be inconvenient), he restrains the permission to the marriage of one husband with one wife:—"It is good for a man not to touch a woman nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

The manners of different countries have varied in nothing more than in their domestic constitutions. Less polished and more luxurious nations have either not perceived the bad effects of polygamy, or, if they did perceive them, they who in such countries possessed the power of reforming the laws have been unwilling to resign their own gratifications. Polygamy is retained at this day among the Turks, and throughout every part of Asia in which Christianity is not professed. In Christian countries, it is universally prohibited. In Sweden, it is punished with death. In England, besides the nullity of the second marriage it subjects the offender to transportation, or imprisonment and branding, for the first offence, and to capital punishment for the second. And whatever may be said in behalf of polygamy when it is authorized by the law of the land, the marriage of a second wife during the lifetime of the first, in countries where such a second marriage is void, must be ranked with the most dangerous and cruel of those frauds, by which a woman is cheated out of her fortune, her person, and her happiness.

The ancient Medes compelled their citizens, in one canton, to take seven wives; in another, each woman to receive five husbands: according as war had made, in one quarter of their country, an extraordinary havoc among the men, or the women had been carried away by an enemy from another. This regulation, so far as it was adapted to the proportion which subsisted between the number of males and females, was founded in the reason upon which the most improved nations of Europe proceed at present.

Cæsar found amongst the inhabitants of this island a species of polygamy, if it may be so called, which was perfectly singular. *Uxores*, says he, *habent deni duodenique inter se communes: et maximè fratres cum fratribus, parentesque cum liberis: sed si qui sint ex his nati, eorum habentur liberi, quo primum virgo quæque deducta est.*

CHAPTER VII.

Of Divorce

BY *divorce*, I mean the dissolution of the marriage-contract, by the act, and at the will, of the husband.

This power was allowed to the husband, among the Jews, the Greeks, and latter Romans; and is at this day exercised by the Turks and Persians.

The congruity of such a right with the law of nature, is the question before us.

And, in the first place, it is manifestly inconsistent with the duty which the parents owe to their children; which duty can never be so well fulfilled as by their cohabitation and united care. It is also incompatible with the right which the mother possesses, as well as the *father, to the gratitude of* her children and the comfort of their society;

of both which she is almost necessarily deprived, by her dismission from her husband's family.

Where this objection does not interfere, I know of no principle of the law of nature applicable to the question, beside that of general expediency.

For, if we say, that arbitrary divorces are excluded by the terms of the marriage-contract, it may be answered, that the contract might be so framed as to admit of this condition.

If we argue, with some moralists, that the obligation of a contract naturally continues, so long as the purpose, which the contracting parties had in view, requires its continuance; it will be difficult to shew what purpose of the contract (the care of children excepted) should confine a man to a woman, from whom he seeks to be loose.

If we contend, with others, that a contract cannot, by the law of nature, be dissolved, unless the parties be replaced in the situation which each possessed before the contract was entered into; we shall be called upon to prove this to be a universal or indispensible property of contracts.

I confess myself unable to assign any circumstance in the marriage contract, which esentially distinguishes it from other contracts, or which proves that it contains, what many have ascribed to it, a natural incapacity of being dissolved by the consent of the parties, at the option of one of them, or either of them. But if we trace the effects of such a rule upon the general happiness of married life, we shall perceive reasons of expediency, that abundantly justify the policy of those laws which refuse to the husband the power of divorce, or restrain it to a few extreme and specific provocations: and our principles teach us to pronounce that to be contrary to the law of nature, which can be proved to be detrimental to the common happiness of the human species.

A lawgiver, whose counsels are directed by views of general utility, and obstructed by no local impediment, would make the marriage-contract indissoluble during the joint lives of the parties, for the sake of the following advantages:—

I. Because this tends to preserve peace and concord between married persons, by perpetuating their common interest, and by inducing a necessity of mutual compliance.

There is great weight and substance in both these considerations. An earlier termination of the union would produce a separate interest. The wife would naturally look forward to the dissolution of the partnership, and endeavour to draw to herself a fund against the time when she was no longer to have access to the same resources. This would beget peculation on one side, and mistrust on the other; evils which at present very little disturb the confidence of the married life. The second effect, of making the union determinable only by death, is not less beneficial. It necessarily happens that adverse tempers, habits, and tastes, oftentimes meet in marriage. In which case, each party must take pains to give up what offends, and practise what may gratify, the other. A man and woman in love with each other, do this insensibly; but love is neither general nor durable: and where that is wanting, no lessons of duty, no delicacy of sentiment, will go half so far with the generality of mankind and womankind, as this one *intelligible* reflection, that they must each make the best of their bar-

gain; and that seeing they must either both be miserable, or both share in the same happiness, neither can find their own comfort, but in promoting the pleasure of the other. These compliances, though at first extorted by necessity, become in time easy and mutual; and, though less endearing than assiduities which take their rise from affection, generally procure to the married pair a repose and satisfaction sufficient for their happiness.

II. Because new objects of desire would be continually sought after, if men could, at will, be released from their subsisting engagements. Suppose the husband to have once preferred his wife to all other women, the duration of this preference cannot be trusted to. Possession makes a great difference: and there is no other security against the invitations of novelty, than the known impossibility of obtaining the object. Did the cause which brings the sexes together, hold them together by the same force with which it first attracted them to each other; or could the woman be restored to her personal integrity, and to all the advantages of her virgin estate; the power of divorce might be deposited in the hands of her husband, with less danger of abuse or inconveniency. But constituted as mankind are, and injured as the repudiated wife generally must be, it is necessary to add a stability to the condition of married women, more secure than the continuance of their husbands' affection; and to supply to both sides, by a sense of duty and of obligation, what satiety has impaired of passion and of personal attachment. Upon the whole, the power of divorce is evidently and greatly to the disadvantage of the woman; and the only question appears to be, whether the real and permanent happiness of one half of the species should be surrendered to the caprice and voluptuousness of the other.

We have considered divorces as depending upon the will of the husband, because that is the way in which they have actually obtained in many parts of the world; but the same objections apply, in a great degree, to divorces by mutual consent: especially when we consider the indelicate situation and small prospect of happiness, which remains to the party who opposed his or her dissent to the liberty and desire of the other.

The law of nature admits of an exception in favour of the injured party, in cases of adultery, of obstinate desertion, of attempts upon life, of outrageous cruelty, of incurable madness, and perhaps of personal imbecility, but by no means indulges the same privileges to mere dislike, to opposition of humours and inclinations, to contrariety of taste and temper, to complaints of coldness, neglect, severity, peevishness, jealousy: not that these reasons are trivial, but because such objections may always be alleged, and are impossible by testimony to be ascertained; so that to allow implicit credit to them, and to dissolve marriages, whenever either party thought fit to pretend them, would lead in its effect to all the licentiousness of arbitrary divorces.

Milton's story is well known. Upon a quarrel with his wife, he paid his addresses to another woman, and set forth a public vindication of his conduct, by attempting to prove, that confirmed dislike was as just a foundation for dissolving the marriage-contract, as adultery; to which position, and to all the arguments by which it can be supported, the above consideration affords a sufficient answer. And if a married pair, in actual and irreconcileable discord, complain that their

happiness would be better consulted, by permitting them to determine a connexion which is become odious to both, it may be told them, that the same permission, as a general rule, would produce libertinism, dissension, and misery, amongst thousands, who are now virtuous, and quiet, and happy, in their condition: and it ought to satisfy them to reflect, that when their happiness is sacrificed to the operation of an unrelenting rule, it is sacrificed to the happiness of the community.

The Scriptures seem to have drawn the obligation tighter than the law of nature left it. "Whosoever," saith Christ, "shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery." Matt. xix. 9. The law of Moses, for reasons of local expediency, permitted the Jewish husband to put away his wife: but whether for every cause, or for what causes, appears to have been controverted amongst the interpreters of those times. Christ, the precepts of whose religion were calculated for more general use and observation, revokes this permission (as given to the Jews "for the hardness of their hearts," and promulges a law which was thenceforward to confine divorces to the single case of adultery in the wife. And I see no sufficient reason to depart from the plain and strict meaning of Christ's words. The rule was new. It both surprised and offended his disciples; yet Christ added nothing to relax or explain it.

Inferior causes may justify the separation of husband and wife, although they will not authorize such a dissolution of the marriage-contract as would leave either party at liberty to marry again; for it is that liberty, in which the danger and mischief of divorces principally consist. If the care of children does not require that they should live together, and it is become in the serious judgment of both, necessary for their mutual happiness that they should separate, let them separate by consent. Nevertheless, this necessity can hardly exist, without guilt and misconduct on one side, or on both. Moreover, cruelty, ill usage, extreme violence or moroseness of temper, or other great and continued provocations, make it lawful for the party aggrieved to withdraw from the society of the offender without his or her consent. The law which imposes the marriage-vow, whereby the parties promise to keep "to each other," or in other words, to live together, must be understood to impose it with a silent reservation of these cases; because the same law has constituted a judicial relief from the tyranny of the husband, by the divorce *à mensa et toro*, and by the provision which it makes for the separate maintenance of the injured wife. St. Paul likewise distinguishes between a wife's merely separating herself from the family of her husband, and her marrying again:—"Let not the wife depart from her husband; but and if she do depart, let her remain unmarried."

The law of this country, in conformity to our Saviour's injunction, confines the dissolution of the marriage-contract to the single case of adultery in the wife; and a divorce even in that case, can only be brought about by the operation of an act of parliament, founded upon a previous sentence in the ecclesiastical court, and a verdict against the adulterer at common law: which proceedings taken together, compose as complete an investigation of the complaint as a cause can receive. It has lately been proposed to the legislature to annex a clause

to these acts, restraining the offending party from marrying with the companion of her crime, who, by the course of proceeding, is always known and convicted; for there is reason to fear, that adulterous connexions are often formed with the prospect of bringing them to this conclusion; at least, when the seducer has once captivated the affection of a married woman, he may avail himself of this tempting argument to subdue her scruples, and complete his victory: and the legislature, as the business is managed at present, assists by its interposition the criminal design of the offenders, and confers a privilege where it ought to inflict a punishment. The proposal deserved an experiment: but something more penal will, I apprehend, be found necessary to check the progress of this alarming depravity. Whether a law might not be framed, directing *the fortune of the adulteress to descend as in case of her natural death:* reserving, however, a certain proportion of the produce of it, by way of annuity, for her subsistence (such annuity in no case, to exceed a fixed sum), and also so far suspending the estate in the hands of the heir as to preserve the inheritance to any children she might bear to a second marriage, in case there was none to succeed in the place of their mother by the first: whether, I say such a law would not render female virtue in higher life less vincible, as well as the seducers of that virtue less urgent in their suit, we recommend to the deliberation of those who are willing to attempt the reformation of this important, but most incorrigible, class of the community. A passion for splendour, for expensive amusements and distinctions, is commonly found, in that description of women who would become the objects of such a law, not less inordinate than their other appetites. A severity of the kind we propose, applies immediately to that passion. And there is no room for any complaint of injustice, since the provisions above stated, with others which might be contrived, confine the punishment, so far as it is possible, to the person of the offender; suffering the estate to remain to the heir, or within the family, of the ancestor from whom it came, or to attend the appointments of his will.

Sentences of the ecclesiastical courts, which release the parties *a vinculo matrimonii* by reason of impuberty, frigidity, consanguinity within the prohibited degrees, prior marriage, or want of the requisite consent of parents and guardians, are not dissolutions of the marriage-contract, but judicial declarations that there never was any marriage; such impediment subsisting at the time, as rendered the celebration of the marriage-rite a mere nullity. And the rite itself contains an exception of these impediments. The man and woman to be married are charged, "if they know any impediment why they may not be lawfully joined together to confess it;" and assured "that so many as are coupled together, otherwise than God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful:" all which is intended by way of solemn notice to the parties, that the vow they are about to make will bind their consciences and authorize their cohabitation, only upon the supposition that no legal impediment exists.

CHAPTER VIII

Marriage.

WHETHER it hath grown out of some tradition of the Divine appointment of marriage in the persons of our first parents, or merely from a design to impress the obligation of the marriage-contract with a solemnity suited to its importance, the marriage-rite, in almost all countries of the world, has been made a religious ceremony;* although marriage, in its own nature, and abstracted from the rules and declarations which the Jewish and Christian Scriptures deliver concerning it, be properly a civil contract, and nothing more.

With respect to one main article in matrimonial alliances, a total alteration has taken place in the fashion of the world; the wife now brings money to her husband: whereas anciently the husband paid money to the family of the wife; as was the case among the *Jewish* patriarchs, the *Greeks*, and the old inhabitants of *Germany*.† This alteration has proved of no small advantage to the female sex: for their importance in point of fortune procures to them, in modern times, that assiduity and respect, which are always wanted to compensate for the inferiority of their strength; but which their personal attractions would not always secure.

Our business is with marriage as it is established in this country. And in treating thereof, it will be necessary to state the terms of the marriage-vow in order to discover:—

1. What duties this vow creates.
2. What situation of mind at the time, is inconsistent with it.
3. By what subsequent behaviour it is violated.

The husband promises on his part, "to love, comfort, honour, and keep, his wife;" the wife on hers, "to obey, serve, love, honour, and keep, her husband;" in every variety of health, fortune, and condition; and both stipulate "to forsake all others, and to keep only unto one another, so long as they both shall live." This promise is called the marriage-vow; is witnessed before God and the congregation: accompanied with prayers to Almighty God for his blessing upon it: and attended with such circumstances of devotion and solemnity as place the obligation of it, and the guilt of violating it, nearly upon the same foundation with that of oaths.

The parties by this vow engage their personal fidelity expressly and specifically; they engage likewise to consult and promote each other's happiness; the wife, moreover, promises *obedience* to her husband. Nature may have made and left the sexes of the human species nearly equal in their faculties, and perfectly so in their rights; but to guard against those competitions which equality, or a contested superiority

* It was not, however, in Christian countries required that marriages should be celebrated in churches, till the thirteenth century of the Christian era. Marriages in *England* during the Usurpation, were solemnized before justices of the peace; but for what purpose this novelty was introduced, except to degrade the clergy, does not appear.

† The ancient *Assyrians* sold their *beauties* by an annual auction. The prices were applied by way of portions to the more homely. By this contrivance, all of *both sorts* were disposed of in marriage.

is almost sure to produce, the Christian Scriptures enjoin upon the wife that obedience which she here promises, and in terms so peremptory and absolute, that it seems to extend to every thing not criminal, or not entirely inconsistent with the woman's happiness. "Let the wife," says St. Paul, "be subject to her own husband in every thing." —"The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," says the same Apostle, speaking of the duty of wives, "is, in the sight of God, of great price." No words ever expressed the true merit of the female character so well as these.

The condition of human life will not permit us to say, that no one can conscientiously marry, who does not prefer the person at the altar to all other men or women in the world; but we can have no difficulty in pronouncing (whether we respect the end of the institution, or the plain terms in which the contract is conceived), that whoever is conscious, at the time of his marriage, of such a dislike to the woman he is about to marry, or of such a subsisting attachment to some other woman, that he cannot reasonably, nor does in fact, expect ever to entertain an affection for his future wife, is guilty, when he pronounces the marriage-vow, of a direct and deliberate prevarication; and that, too, aggravated by the presence of those ideas of religion, and of the Supreme Being, which the place, the ritual, and the solemnity of the occasion, cannot fail of bringing to his thoughts. The same likewise of the woman. This charge must be imputed to all who, from mercenary motives, marry the objects of their aversion and disgust; and likewise to those who desert, from any motive whatever, the object of their affection, and, without being able to subdue that affection marry another.

The crime of falsehood is also incurred by the man who intends, at the time of his marriage, to commence, renew, or continue, a personal commerce with any other woman. And the parity of reason, if a wife be capable of so much guilt, extends to her.

The marriage-vow is violated.

I. By adultery.

II. By any behaviour which, knowingly, renders the life of the other miserable; as desertion, neglect, prodigality, drunkenness, peevishness, penuriousness, jealousy, or any levity of conduct which administers occasion of jealousy.

A late regulation in the law of marriages, in this country, has made the consent of the father, if he be living,—of the mother, if she survive the father, and remain unmarried,—or of guardians, if both parents be dead,—necessary to the marriage of a person under twenty-one years of age. By the Roman law, the consent *et avi et patris* was required so long as they lived. In France, the consent of parents is necessary to the marriage of sons, until they attain to thirty years of age; of daughters, until twenty-five. In Holland, for sons, till twenty-five; for daughters, till twenty. And this distinction between the sexes appears to be well founded: for a woman is usually as properly qualified for the domestic and interior duties of a wife or mother at eighteen, as a man is for the business of the world, and the more arduous care of providing for a family, at twenty-one.

The constitution also of the human species indicates the same distinction.*

* Cùm vis prolem *procreandi* diutiùs hæreat in mare quàm in fœminâ, populi numerus *nequaquam minuetur*, si seriùs venerem colere inceperint viri.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the duty of Parents.

THAT virtue which confines its beneficence within the walls of a man's own house, we have been accustomed to consider as little better than a more refined selfishness; and yet it will be confessed, that the subject and matter of this class of duties are inferior to none in utility and importance: and where, it may be asked, is virtue the most valuable, but where it does the most good? What duty is the most obligatory, but that on which the most depends? And where have we happiness and misery so much in our power, or liable to be so affected by our conduct, as in our own families? It will also be acknowledged, that the good order and happiness of the world are better upholden whilst each man applies himself to his own concerns and the care of his own family, to which he is present, than if every man, from an excess of mistaken generosity, should leave his own business to undertake his neighbour's, which he must always manage with less knowledge, conveniency, and success. If, therefore, the low estimation of these virtues be well founded, it must be owing not to their inferior importance, but to some defect or impurity in the motive. And indeed it cannot be denied, that it is in the power of *association* so to unite our children's interest with our own, as that we shall often pursue both from the same motive, place both in the same object, and with as little sense of duty in one pursuit as in the other. Where this is the case, the judgment above stated is not far from the truth. And so often as we find a solicitous care of a man's own family, in a total absence or extreme penury of every other virtue, or interfering with other duties, or directing its operation solely to the temporal happiness of the children, placing that happiness in amusement and indulgence whilst they are young, or in advancement of fortune when they grow up, there is reason to believe that this is the case. In this way, the common opinion concerning these duties may be accounted for and defended. If we look to the subject of them, we perceive them to be indispensable: if we regard the motive, we find them often not very meritorious. Wherefore, although a man seldom rises high in our esteem who has nothing to recommend him beside the care of his own family, yet we always condemn the neglect of this duty with the utmost severity; both by reason of the manifest and immediate mischief which we see arising from this neglect, and because it argues a want not only of parental affection, but of those moral principles which ought to come in aid of that affection where it is wanting. And if, on the other hand, our praise and esteem of these duties be not proportioned to the good they produce, or to the indignation with which we resent the absence of them, it is for this reason; that virtue is the most valuable, not where it produces the most good, but where it is the most wanted: which is not the case here; because its place is often supplied by instincts, or involuntary associations. Nevertheless, the offices of a parent may be discharged from a consciousness of their obligation, as well as other duties; and a sense of this obligation is sometimes necessary to assist the stimulus of parental

affection; especially in stations of life, in which the wants of a family cannot be supplied without the continual hard labour of the father, and without his refraining from many indulgencies and recreations which unmarried men of like condition are able to purchase. Where the parental affection is sufficiently strong, or has fewer difficulties to surmount, a principle of duty may still be wanted to direct and regulate its exertions: for otherwise it is apt to spend and waste itself in a womanish fondness for the person of the child; and improvident attention to his present ease and gratification; a pernicious facility and compliance with his humours; an excessive and superfluous care to provide the externals of happiness, with little or no attention to the internal sources of virtue and satisfaction. Universally, wherever a parent's conduct is prompted or directed by a sense of duty, there is so much virtue.

Having premised thus much concerning the place which parental duties hold in the scale of human virtues, we proceed to state and explain the duties themselves.

When moralists tell us, that parents are bound to do *all they can* for their children, they tell us more than is true; for at that rate, every expense which might have been spared, and every profit omitted which might have been made, would be criminal.

The duty of parents has its limits, like other duties; and admits, if not of perfect precision, at least of rules definite enough for application.

These rules may be explained under the several heads of *maintenance*, *education*, and *a reasonable provision for the child's happiness in respect of outward condition*.

I. *Maintenance.*

The wants of children make it necessary that some person maintain them; and, as no one has a right to burden others by his act, it follows that the parents are bound to undertake this charge themselves. Beside this plain inference, the affection of parents to their children, it it be instinctive, and the provision which nature has prepared in the person of the mother for the sustentation of the infant, concerning the existence and design of which there can be no doubt, are manifest indications of the Divine will.

Hence we learn the guilt of those who run away from their families, or (what is much the same), in consequence of idleness or drunkenness, throw them upon a parish; or who leave them destitute at their death, when by diligence and frugality, they might have laid up a provision for their support: also of those who refuse or neglect the care of their bastard offspring, abandoning them to a condition in which they must either perish or become burdensome to others; for the duty of maintenance, like the reason upon which it is founded, extends to bastards, as well as to legitimate children.

The Christian Scriptures, although they concern themselves little with maxims of prudence or economy, and much less authorize worldly-mindedness or avarice, have yet declared in explicit terms their judgment of the obligation of this duty:—"If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," (1 Tim. v. 8.); he hath disgraced the Christian profession, and fallen short in a duty which even infidels acknowledge.

II. *Education.*

Education, in the most extensive sense of the word, may comprehend every preparation that is made in our youth for the sequel of our lives; and in this sense I use it.

Some such preparation is necessary for children of all conditions, because without it they must be miserable, and probably will be vicious, when they grow up, either from want of the means of subsistence, or from want of rational and inoffensive occupation. In civilized life, every thing is effected by art and skill. Whence a person who is provided with neither (and neither can be acquired without exercise and instruction) will be useless; and he that is useless, will generally be at the same time mischievous to the community. So that to send an uneducated child into the world, is injurious to the rest of mankind; it is little better than to turn out a mad dog or a wild beast into the streets.

In the inferior classes of the community, this principle condemns the neglect of parents, who do not inure their children betimes to labour and restraint, by providing them with apprenticeships, services, or other regular employment, but who suffer them to waste their youth in idleness and vagrancy, or to betake themselves to some lazy, trifling, and precarious calling; for the consequence of having thus tasted the sweets of natural liberty, at an age when their passion and relish for it are at the highest, is, that they become incapable, for the remainder of their lives, of continued industry, or of persevering attention to any thing; spend their time in a miserable struggle between the importunity of want, and the irksomeness of regular application; and are prepared to embrace every expedient, which presents a hope of supplying their necessities without confining them to the plough, the loom, the shop, or the counting-house

In the middle orders of society, those parents are more reprehensible, who neither qualify their children for a profession, nor enable them to live without one;* and those in the highest, who, from indolence, indulgence, or avarice, omit to procure their children those liberal attainments which are necessary to make them useful in the stations to which they are destined. A man of fortune, who permits his son to consume the season of education in hunting, shooting, or in frequenting horse-races, assemblies, or other unedifying, if not vicious, diversions, defrauds the community of a benefactor, and bequeaths them a nuisance.

Some, though not the same, preparation for the sequel of their lives, is necessary for youth of every description; and therefore for bastards, as well as for children of better expectations. Consequently they who leave the education of their bastards to chance, contenting themselves with making provision for their subsistence, desert half their duty.

III. A reasonable provision for the happiness of a child, in respect of outward condition, requires three things: a situation suited to his habits and reasonable expectations; a competent provision for the exigencies of that situation; and a probable security for his virtue.

* Amongst the *Athenians*, if the parent did not put his child into a way of getting a livelihood, the child was not bound to make provision for the parent when old and necessitous.

The first two articles will vary with the condition of the parent. A situation, somewhat approaching in rank and condition to the parent's own; or where that is not practicable, similar to what other parents of like condition provide for their children; bounds the reasonable, as well as (generally speaking) the actual, expectations of the child, and therefore contains the extent of the parent's obligation.

Hence a peasant satisfies his duty, who sends out his children, properly instructed for their occupation, to husbandry or to any branch of manufacture. Clergymen, lawyers, physicians, officers in the army or navy, gentlemen possessing moderate fortunes, of inheritance, or exercising trade in a large or liberal way, are required by the same rule to provide their sons with learned professions, commissions in the army or navy, places in public offices, or reputable branches of merchandise. Providing a child with a situation, includes a competent supply for the expenses of that situation, until the profits of it enable the child to support himself. Noblemen and gentlemen of high rank and fortune may be bound to transmit an inheritance to the representatives of their family, sufficient for their support without the aid of a trade or profession, to which there is little hope that a youth, who has been flattered with other expectations, will apply himself with diligence or success. In these parts of the world, public opinion has assorted the members of the community into four or five general classes, each class comprising a great variety of employments and professions, the choice of which must be committed to the private discretion of the parent.* All that can be expected from parents as a *duty*, and therefore the only rule which a moralist can deliver upon the subject, is that they endeavour to preserve the children in the *class* in which they are born, that is to say, in which others of similar expectations are accustomed to be placed; and that they be careful to confine their hopes and habits of indulgence to objects which will continue to be attainable.

It is an ill-judged thrift, in some rich parents, to bring up their sons to mean employments for the sake of saving the charge of a more expensive education; for these sons, when they become masters of their liberty and fortune, will hardly continue in occupations by which they think themselves degraded, and are seldom qualified for any thing better.

An attention, in the first place, to the exigencies of the children's respective conditions in the world; and a regard, in the second place,

* The health and virtue of a child's future life are considerations so superior to all others, that whatever is likely to have the smallest influence upon these, deserves the parent's first attention. In respect of health, agriculture, and all active, rural, and out-of-door employments, are to be preferred to manufactures and sedentary occupations. In respect of virtue, a course of dealings in which the advantage is mutual, in which the profit on one side is connected with the benefit of the other (which is the case in trade, and all serviceable art or labour), is more favourable to the moral character, than callings in which one man's gain is another man's loss; in which what you acquire is acquired without equivalent, and parted with in distress; as in gaming, and whatever partakes of gaming, and in the predatory profits of war. The following distinctions also deserve notice.—A business, like a retail trade, in which the profits are small and frequent, and accruing from the employment, furnishes a moderate and constant engagement to the mind, and, so far, with

to their reasonable expectations, always postponing the expectations to the exigencies when both cannot be satisfied; ought to guide parents in the disposal of their fortunes after their death. And these exigencies and expectations must be measured by the standard which custom has established: for there is a certain appearance, attendance, establishment, and mode of living, which custom has annexed to the several ranks and orders of civil life (and which compose what is called *decency*), together with a certain society, and particular pleasures belonging to each class; and a young person who is withheld from sharing in these for want of fortune, can scarcely be said to have a fair chance for happiness; the indignity and mortification of such a seclusion being what few tempers can bear, or bear with contentment. And as to the second consideration of what a child may reasonably expect from his parent, he will expect what he sees all or most others in similar circumstances receive; and we can hardly call expectations unreasonable, which it is impossible to suppress.

By virtue of this rule, a parent is justified in making a difference between his children, according as they stand in greater or less need of the assistance of his fortune, in consequence of the difference of their age or sex, or of the situations in which they are placed, or the various success which they have met with.

On account of the few lucrative employments which are left to the female sex, and by consequence the little opportunity they have of adding to their income, daughters ought to be the particular objects of a parent's care and foresight; and as an option of marriage, from which they can reasonably expect happiness, is not presented to every woman who deserves it, especially in times in which a licentious celibacy is in fashion with the men, a father should endeavour to enable his daughters to lead a single life with independence and decorum, even though he subtract more for that purpose from the portions of his sons than is agreeable to modern usage, or than they expect.

But when the exigencies of their several situations are provided for, and not before, a parent ought to admit the second consideration, the satisfaction of his children's expectations; and upon that principle to prefer the eldest son to the rest, and sons to daughters: which constitutes the right, and the whole right, of primogeniture, as well as the only reason for the preference of one sex to the other. The preference, indeed, of the first-born has one public good effect, that if the estate were divided equally amongst the sons, it would probably make them all idle; whereas, by the present rule of descent, it makes only one so; which is the less evil of the two. And it must further be observed on the part of the sons, that if the rest of the community make it a rule to prefer sons to daughters, an individual of that community ought to guide himself by the same rule, upon principles of

better with the general disposition of mankind, than professions which are supported by fixed-salaries, as stations in the church, army, navy, revenue, public offices, &c. or wherein the profits are made in large sums, by a few great concerns, or fortunate adventures; as in many branches of wholesale and foreign merchandise, in which the occupation is neither so constant, nor the activity so kept alive by immediate encouragement. For security, manual arts exceed merchandise, and such as supply the wants of mankind are better than those which minister to their pleasure. Situations which promise an early settlement in marriage, are on many accounts to be chosen before those which require a longer waiting for a larger establishment.

more equality. For, as the son suffers by the rule, in the fortune he may expect in marriage, it is but reasonable that he should receive the advantage of it in his own inheritance. Indeed, whatever the rule be, as to the preference of one sex, to the other, marriage restores the equality. And as money is generally more convertible to profit, and more likely to promote industry, in the hands of men than of women, the custom of this country may properly be complied with, when it does not interfere with the weightier reason explained in the last paragraph.

The point of the children's actual expectations, together with the expediency of subjecting the illicit commerce of the sexes to every discouragement which it can receive, makes the difference between the claims of legitimate children and of bastards. But neither reason will in any case justify the leaving of bastards to the world without provision, education, or profession; or, what is more cruel, without the means of continuing in the situation to which the parent has introduced them; which last is, to leave them to inevitable misery.

After the first requisite, namely, a provision for the exigencies of his situation, is satisfied, a parent may diminish a child's portion in order to punish any flagrant crime, or to punish contumacy and want of filial duty in instances not otherwise criminal; for a child who is conscious of bad behaviour, or of contempt of his parent's will and happiness, cannot reasonably expect the same instances of his munificence

A child's vices may be of that sort, and his vicious habits so incorrigible, as to afford much the same reason for believing that he will waste or misemploy the fortune put into his power, as if he were mad or idiotish, in which case a parent may treat him as a madman or an idiot; that is, may deem it sufficient to provide for his support, by an annuity equal to his wants and innocent enjoyments, and which he may be restrained from alienating. This seems to be the only case in which a disinherison, nearly absolute, is justifiable.

Let not a father hope to excuse an inofficious disposition of his fortune, by alleging, that "every man may do what he will with his own." All the truth which this expression contains is, that his discretion is under no control of law; and that his will, however capricious, will be valid. This by no means absolves his conscience from the obligations of a parent, or imports that he may neglect, without injustice, the several wants and expectations of his family, in order to gratify a whim or pique, or indulge a preference founded in no reasonable distinction of merit or situation. Although in his intercourse with his family, and in the lesser endearments of domestic life, a parent may not always resist his partiality to a favourite child (which, however, should be both avoided and concealed, as oftentimes productive of lasting jealousies and discontents); yet when he sits down to make his will, these tendernesses must give place to more manly deliberations.

A father of a family is bound to adjust his economy with a view to these demands upon his fortune; and until a sufficiency for these

ends is acquired or in due time *probably* will be acquired (for, in human affairs, *probability* ought to content us), frugality and exertions of industry are duties. He is also justified in the declining expensive liberality; for, to take from those who want, in order to give to those who want, adds nothing to the stock of public happiness. Thus far, therefore, and no farther, the plea of "children," of "large families," "charity begins at home," &c. is an excuse for parsimony, and in answer to those who solicit our bounty. Beyond this point, as the use of riches becomes less, the desire of *laying up* should abate proportionably. The truth is, our children gain not so much as we imagine, in the chance of this world's happiness, or even of its external prosperity, by setting out in it with large capitals. Of those who have died rich, a great part began with little. And, in respect of enjoyment, there is no comparison between a fortune which a man acquires by well applied industry, or by a series of successes in his business, and one found in his possession, or received from another.

A principal part of a parent's duty is still behind, *viz.* the using of proper precautions and expedients, in order to form and preserve his children's virtue.

To us, who believe that, in one stage or other of our existence, virtue will conduct to happiness, and vice terminate in misery; and who observe withal, that men's virtues and vices are, to a certain degree, produced or affected by the management of their youth, and the situations in which they are placed: to all who attend to these reasons, the obligation to consult a child's virtue will appear to differ in nothing from that by which the parent is bound to provide for his maintenance or fortune. The child's interest is concerned in the one means of happiness as well as in the other; and both means are equally, and almost exclusively, in the parent's power.

For this purpose, the first point to be endeavoured after is, to impress upon children the idea of *accountableness, that* is, to accustom them to look forward to the consequences of their actions in another world; which can only be brought about by the parents visibly acting with a view to these consequences themselves. Parents, to do them justice, are seldom sparing of lessons of virtue and religion; in admonitions which cost little, and which profit less; whilst their *example* exhibits a continual contradiction of what they teach. A father, for instance, will, with much solemnity and apparent earnestness, warn his son against idleness, excess in drinking, debauchery and extravagance, who himself loiters about all day without employment; comes home every night drunk; is made infamous in his neighbourhood by some profligate connexion; and wastes the fortune which should support or remain a provision for his family, in riot, or luxury, or ostentation. Or he will discourse gravely before his children of the obligation and importance of revealed religion, whilst they see the most frivolous and oftentimes feigned excuses detain him from its reasonable and solemn ordinances. Or he will set before them, perhaps, the supreme and tremendous authority of Almighty God; that such a Being ought not to be named, or even thought upon, without sentiments of profound awe and veneration. This may be the lecture

he delivers to his family one hour; when the next, if an occasion arise to excite his anger, his mirth, or his surprise, they will hear him treat the name of the Deity with the most irreverent profanation, and sport with the terms and denunciations of the Christian religion, as if they were the language of some ridiculous and long-exploded superstition. Now, even a child is not to to be imposed upon by such mockery. He sees through the grimace of this counterfeited concern for virtue. He discovers that his parent is acting a part; and receives his admonitions as he would hear the same maxims from the mouth of a player. And when once this opinion has taken possession of the child's mind, it has a fatal effect upon the parent's influence in all subjects; even those, in which he himself may be sincere and convinced. Whereas a silent, but observable, regard to the duties of religion, in the parent's own behaviour, will take a sure and gradual hold of the child's disposition, much beyond formal reproofs and chidings, which, being generally prompted by some present provocation, discover more of anger than of principle, and are always received with a temporary alienation and disgust.

A good parent's first care is, to be virtuous himself; his second, to make his virtues as easy and engaging to those about him as their nature will admit. Virtue itself offends, when coupled with forbidding manners. And some virtues may be urged to such excess, or brought forward so unseasonably, as to discourage and repel those who observe and who are acted upon by them, instead of exciting an inclination to imitate and adopt them. Young minds are particularly liable to these unfortunate impressions. For instance, if a father's economy degenerate into a minute and teasing parsimony, it is odds but that the son, who has suffered under it, sets out a sworn enemy to all rules of order and frugality. If a father's piety be morose, rigorous, and tinged with melancholy, perpetually breaking in upon the recreation of his family, and surfeiting them with the language of religion on all occasions, there is danger lest the son carry from home with him a settled prejudice against seriousness and religion, as inconsistent with every plan of a pleasurable life; and turn out, when he mixes with the world, a character of levity or dissoluteness.

Something likewise may be done towards the correcting or improving of those early inclinations which children discover, by disposing them into situations the least dangerous to their particular characters. Thus, I would make choice of a retired life for young persons addicted to licentious pleasures; of private stations for the proud and passionate; of liberal professions, and a town life, for the mercenary and sottish: and not, according to the general practice of parents, send dissolute youths into the army; penurious tempers to trade; or make a crafty lad an attorney; or flatter a vain and haughty temper with elevated names, or situations, or callings, to which the fashion of the world has annexed precedency and distinction, but in which his disposition, without at all promoting his success, will serve both to multiply and exasperate his disappointments. In the same way, that is, with a view to the particular frame and tendency of the pupil's character, I would make choice of a public or private educa-

tion. The reserved, timid, and indolent, will have their faculties called forth and their nerves invigorated by a public education. Youths of strong spirits and passions will be safer in a private education. At our public schools, as far as I have observed, more literature is acquired, and more vice; quick parts are cultivated, slow ones are neglected. Under private tuition, a moderate proficiency in juvenile learning is seldom exceeded, but with more certainty attained.

CHAPTER X.

The Rights of Parents.

THE rights of parents result from their duties. If it be the duty of a parent to educate his children, to form them for a life of usefulness and virtue, to provide for them situations needful for their subsistence and suited to their circumstances, and to prepare them for those situations; he has a right to such authority, and in support of that authority to exercise such discipline as may be necessary for these purposes. The law of nature acknowledges no other foundation of a parent's right over his children, besides his duty towards them (I speak now of such rights as may be enforced by coercion). This relation confers no property in their persons, or natural dominion over them, as is commonly supposed.

Since it is, in general necessary to determine the destination of children, before they are capable of judging of their own happiness, parents have a right to elect professions for them.

As the mother herself owes obedience to the father, her authority must submit to his. In a competition, therefore, of commands, the father is to be obeyed. In case of the death of either, the authority, as well as duty, of both parents, devolves upon the survivor.

These rights, always following the duty, belong likewise to guardians; and so much of them as is delegated by the parents or guardians, belongs to tutors, schoolmasters, &c.

From this principle, "that the rights of parents result from their duty," it follows that parents have no natural right over the lives of their children, as was absurdly allowed to Roman fathers; nor any to exercise unprofitable severities; nor to command the commission of crimes: for these rights can never be wanted for the purpose of a parent's duty.

Nor, for the same reason, have parents any right to sell their children into slavery. Upon which, by the way, we may observe, that the children of slaves are not, by the law of nature, born slaves; for, as the master's right is derived to him through the parent, it can never be greater than the parent's own.

Hence also it appears, that parents not only pervert, but exceed, their just authority, when they consult their own ambition, interest or prejudice at the manifest expense of their children's happiness. Of

which abuse of parental power, the following are instances: The shutting up of daughters and younger sons in nunneries and monasteries, in order to preserve entire the estate and dignity of the family; or the using of any arts, either of kindness or unkindness, to induce them to make choice of this way of life themselves; or, in countries where the clergy are prohibited from marriage, putting sons into the church for the same end, who are never likely either to do or receive any good in it, sufficient to compensate for this sacrifice; the urging of children to marriages from which they are averse, with the view of exalting or enriching the family, or for the sake of connecting estates, parties or interests; or the opposing of a marriage, in which the child would probably find his happiness, from a motive of pride, or avarice, or family hostility, or personal pique.

CHAPTER XI.

The Duty of Children.

THE Duty of Children may be considered.

I. During childhood.

II. After they have attained to manhood, but continue in their father's family.

III. After they have attained to manhood, and have left their father's family.

I. *During childhood.*

Children must be supposed to have attained to some degree of discretion before they are capable of any duty. There is an interval of eight or nine years between the dawning and the maturity of reason, in which it is necessary to subject the inclination of children to many restraints, and direct their application to many employments, of the tendency and use of which they cannot judge; for which cause, the submission of children during this period must be ready and implicit, with an exception, however, of any manifest crime which may be commanded them.

II. *After they have attained to manhood, but continue in their father's family.*

If children, when they are grown up, voluntarily continue members of their father's family, they are bound, beside the general duty of gratitude to their parents, to observe such regulations of the family as the father shall appoint; contribute their labour to its support, if required; and confine themselves to such expenses as he shall allow. The obligation would be the same if they were admitted into any other family, or received support from any other hand.

III. *After they have attained to manhood, and have left their father's family.*

In this state of the relation, the duty to parents is simply the duty of gratitude; not different *in kind*, from that which we owe to any other benefactor; *in degree*, just so much exceeding other obligations, by how much a parent has been a greater benefactor than any other

friend. The services and attentions, by which filial gratitude may be testified, can be comprised within no enumeration. It will shew itself in compliances with the will of the parents, however contrary to the child's own taste or judgment, provided it be neither criminal, nor totally inconsistent with his happiness; in a constant endeavour to promote their enjoyments, prevent their wishes, and soften their anxieties; in small matters as well as in great; in assisting them in their business; in contributing to their support, ease, or better accommodation, when their circumstances require it; in affording them our company, in preference to more amusing engagements; in waiting upon their sickness or decrepitude; in bearing with the infirmities of their health or temper, with the peevishness and complaints, the unfashionable, negligent, austere manners, and offensive habits, which often attend upon advanced years; for where must old age find indulgence, if it do not meet with it in the piety and partiality of children.

The most serious contentions between parents and their children are those commonly which relate to marriage, or to the choice of a profession.

A parent has, in no case, a right to destroy his child's happiness. If it be true, therefore, that there exist such personal and exclusive attachments between individuals of different sexes, that the possession of a particular man or woman in marriage be really necessary for the child's happiness; or if it be true, that an aversion to a particular profession may be involuntary and unconquerable; then it will follow, that parents, where this is the case, ought not to urge their authority, and that the child is not bound to obey it.

The point is to discover how far, in any particular instance, this *is* the case. Whether the fondness of lovers ever continues with such intensity, and so long, that the success of their desires constitutes, or the disappointment affects, any considerable portion of their happiness, compared with that of their whole life, it is difficult to determine: but there can be no difficulty in pronouncing, that not one half of those attachments, which young people conceive with so much haste and passion, are of this sort. I believe it also to be true, that there are few aversions to a profession, which resolution and perseverance, in going about the duty of it, and above all, despair of changing, will not subdue; yet there are some such. Wherefore, a child who respects his parents' judgment, and is, as he ought to be, tender of their happiness, owes, at least, so much deference to their will, as to try fairly and faithfully, in one case, whether time and absence will not cool an affection which they disapprove; and, in the other, whether a longer continuance in the profession which they have chosen for him may not reconcile him to it. The whole depends upon the experiment being made on the child's part with sincerity, and not merely with a design of compassing his purpose at last, by means of a simulated and temporary compliance. It is the nature of love and hatred, and of all violent affections, to delude the mind with a persuasion that we shall always continue to feel them as we feel them at present; we cannot conceive that they will either change or cease. Experience of similar or greater changes in ourselves; or a habit of giving credit

to what our parents, or tutors, or books, teach us, may control this persuasion, otherwise it renders youth very untractable: for they see clearly and truly, that it is impossible they should be happy under the circumstances proposed to them, in their present state of mind. After a sincere but ineffectual endeavour, by the child, to accommodate his inclinations to his parent's pleasure, he ought not to suffer in his parent's affection, or in his fortunes. The parent, when he has reasonable proof of this, should acquiesce: at all events, the child is *then* at liberty to provide for his own happiness.

Parents have no right to urge their children upon marriages to which they are averse; nor ought, in any shape, to resent the children's disobedience to such commands. This is a different case from opposing a match of inclination, because the child's misery is a much more probable consequence; it being easier to live without a person that we love, than with one whom we hate. Add to this, that compulsion in marriage necessarily leads to prevarication; as the reluctant party promises an affection, which neither exists, nor is expected to take place; and parental, like all human authority, ceases at the point where obedience becomes criminal.

In the above-mentioned, and in all contests between parents and children, it is the parent's duty to represent to the child the consequences of his conduct; and it will be found his best policy to represent them with fidelity. It is usual for parents to exaggerate these descriptions beyond probability, and by exaggeration to lose all credit with their children; thus, in a great measure, defeating their own end.

Parents are forbidden to interfere, where a trust is reposed personally in the son; and where, consequently, the son was expected, and by virtue of that expectation is obliged, to pursue his own judgment, and not that of any other; as is the case with judicial magistrates in the execution of their office; with members of the legislature in their votes; with electors, where preference is to be given to certain prescribed qualifications. The son may assist his own judgment by the advice of his father, or of any one whom he chooses to consult; but his own judgment, whether it proceed upon knowledge or authority, ought finally to determine his conduct.

The duty of children to their parents was thought worthy to be made the subject of one of the Ten Commandments; and, as such, is recognised by Christ, together with the rest of the moral precepts of the Decalogue, in various places of the gospel.

The same divine Teacher's sentiments concerning the relief of indigent parents, appear sufficiently from that manly and deserved indignation with which he reprehended the wretched casuistry of the Jewish expositors, who, under the name of a tradition, had contrived a method of evading this duty, by converting or pretending to convert, to the treasury of the temple, so much of their property as their distressed parent might be entitled by their law to demand.

Agreeably to this law of Nature and Christianity, children are, by the law of England, bound to support, as well their immediate

parents, as their grandfather and grandmother, or remoter ancestors, who stand in need of support.

Obedience to parents is enjoined by St. Paul to the Ephesians, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right;" and to the Colossians, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."*

By the Jewish law, disobedience to parents was in some extreme cases capital. Deut. xxi. 18.

* Upon which two phrases, "this is right," and, "for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord," being used by St. Paul in a sense perfectly parallel, we may observe, that moral rectitude, and conformity to the Divine will, were, in his apprehension, the same.

BOOK IV.

DUTIES TO OURSELVES.

THIS division of the subject is retained merely for the sake of *method*, by which the writer and the reader are equally assisted. To the subject itself it imports nothing; for, the obligation of all duties being fundamentally the same, it matters little under what class or title any of them are considered. In strictness, there are few duties or crimes which terminate in a man's self; and so far as others are affected by their operation, they have been treated of in some article of the preceding book. We have reserved, however, to this head the *rights of self-defence*; also the consideration of *drunkenness* and *suicide*, as offences against that care of our faculties, and preservation of our persons, which we account duties, and call *duties to ourselves*.

CHAPTER I.

The Rights of Self-defence.

IT has been asserted, that in a state of nature we might lawfully defend the most insignificant right, provided it were a perfect determinate right, by any extremities which the obstinacy of the aggressor rendered necessary. Of this I doubt; because I doubt whether the general rule be worth sustaining at such an expence; and because, apart from the general consequence of yielding to the attempt, it cannot be contended to be for the augmentation of human happiness, that one man should lose his life or a limb, rather than another a pennyworth of his property. Nevertheless, perfect rights can only be distinguished by their value; and it is impossible to ascertain the value at which the liberty of using extreme violence begins. The person attacked, must balance as well as he can, between the general consequence of yielding, and the particular effect of resistance.

However, this right, if it exist in a state of nature, is suspended by the establishment of civil society; because *thereby* other remedies are provided against attacks upon our property, and because it is necessary to the peace and safety of the community, that the prevention, punishment, and redress, of injuries, be adjusted by public laws. Moreover, as the individual is assisted in the recovery of his right, or of a compensation for his right, by the public strength, it is no less equitable than expedient, that he should submit to public arbitration the kind, as well as the measure, of the satisfaction which he is to obtain.

There is one case in which all extremities are justifiable; namely, when our life is assaulted, and it becomes necessary for our preservation to kill the assailant. This is evident in a state of nature; unless it can be shown, that we are bound to prefer the aggressor's life to our own, that is to say, to love our enemy *better* than ourselves, which can never be a debt of justice, nor any where appears to be a duty of charity. Nor is the case altered by our living in civil society: because by the supposition, the laws of society cannot interpose to protect us, nor, by the nature of the case, compel restitution. This liberty is restrained to cases in which no other probable means of preserving our life remain, as flight, calling for assistance, disarming the adversary, &c. The rule holds, whether the danger proceed from a voluntary attack, as by an enemy, robber, or assassin; or from an involuntary one, as by a madman, or person sinking in the water, and dragging us after him; or where two persons are reduced to a situation in which one or both of them must perish; as in a shipwreck, where two seize upon a plank, which will support only one: although to say the truth, these extreme cases, which happen seldom, and hardly, when they do happen, admit of moral agency, are scarcely worth mentioning, much less discussing at length.

The instance which approaches the nearest to the preservation of life, and which seems to justify the same extremities, is the defence of chastity.

In all other cases, it appears to me the safest to consider the taking away of life as authorized by the law of the land; and the person who takes it away, as in the situation of a minister or executioner of the law.

In which view, homicide, in *England*, is justifiable.

1. To prevent the commission of a crime, which, when committed, would be punishable with death. Thus it is lawful to shoot a highwayman, or one attempting to break into a house by night; but not so if the attempt be made in the day-time: which particular distinction, by a consent of legislation that is remarkable, obtained also in the Jewish law, as well as in the laws both of Greece and Rome.

2. In necessary endeavours to carry the law into execution; as in suppressing riots, apprehending malefactors, preventing escapes, &c.

I do not know that the law holds forth its authority to any cases besides those which fall within one or other of the above descriptions; or that, after the exception of immediate danger to life or chastity, the destruction of a human being can be innocent without that authority.

The rights of war are not here taken into the account.

CHAPTER II

Drunkenness.

DRUNKENNESS is either actual or habitual; just as it is one thing to be drunk, and another to be a drunkard. What we shall deliver upon the subject must principally be understood of a *habit* of intemperance: although *part* of the guilt and danger described, may be

applicable to casual excesses: and all of it, in a certain degree, forasmuch as every habit is only a repetition of single instances.

The mischief of drunkenness, from which we are to compute the guilt of it, consists in the following bad effects:

1. It betrays most constitutions either to extravagances of anger, or sins of lewdness.

2. It disqualifies men for the duties of their station, both by the temporary disorder of their faculties, and at length by a constant incapacity and stupefaction.

3. It is attended with expenses, which can often be ill spared.

4. It is sure to occasion uneasiness to the family of the drunkard.

5. It shortens life.

To these consequences of drunkenness must be added the peculiar danger and mischief of the *example*. Drunkenness is a social festive vice: apt, beyond any vice that can be mentioned, to draw in others by the example. The drinker collects his circle; the circle naturally spreads: of those who are drawn within it, many become the corrupters and centre of sets and circles of their own; every one countenancing, and perhaps emulating the rest, till a whole neighbourhood be infected from the contagion of a single example. This account is confirmed by what we often observe of drunkenness, that it is a *local* vice; found to prevail in certain countries, in certain districts of a country, or in particular towns, without any reason to be given for the fashion, but that it had been introduced by some popular examples. With this observation upon the spreading quality of drunkenness, let us connect a remark which belongs to the several evil effects above recited. The consequences of a vice, like the symptons of a disease, though they may be all enumerated in the description, seldom all meet in the same subject. In the instance under consideration, the age and temperature of one drunkard may have little to fear from inflammations of lust or anger; the fortune of a second may not be injured by the expense; a third may have no family to be disquieted by his irregularities; and a fourth may possess a constitution fortified against the poison of strong liquors. But if, as we always ought to do, we comprehend within the consequences of our conduct the mischief and tendency of the example, the above circumstances, however fortunate for the individual, will be found to vary the guilt of his intemperance less, probably, than he supposes. The moralist may expostulate with him thus: Although the waste of time and of money be of small importance to you, it may be of the utmost to some one or other whom your society corrupts. Repeated or long-continued excesses, which hurt not *your* health, may be fatal to your companion. Although you have neither wife, nor child, nor parent, to lament your absence from home, or expect your return to it with terror; other families, in which husbands and fathers have been invited to share in your ebriety or encouraged to imitate it, may justly lay their misery or ruin at your door. This will hold good whether the person seduced be seduced immediately by you, or the vice be propagated from you to him through several intermediate examples. All these considerations it is necessary to assemble, to judge truly of a vice which usually meets with milder names and more indulgence than it deserves.

I omit those outrages upon one another, and upon the peace and

safety of the neighbourhood, in which drunken revels often end; and also those deleterious and maniacal effects which strong liquors produce upon particular constitutions; because, in general propositions concerning drunkenness, no consequences should be included, but what are constant enough to be generally expected.

Drunkenness is repeatedly forbidden by St. Paul: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." "Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness." "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor *drunkards*, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Eph. v. 18: Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. The same apostle likewise condemns drunkenness, as peculiarly inconsistent with the Christian profession;—"They that be drunken, are drunken in the night; but let us who are of the day, be sober." I Thess. v. 7, 8. We are not concerned with the argument; the words amount to a prohibition of drunkenness; and the authority is conclusive.

It is a question of some importance, how far drunkenness is an excuse for the crimes which the drunken person commits.

In the solution of this question, we will first suppose the drunken person to be altogether deprived of moral agency, that is to say, of all reflection and foresight. In this condition, it is evident that he is no more capable of guilt than a madman; although, like him, he may be extremely mischievous. The only guilt with which he is chargeable was incurred at the time when he voluntarily brought himself into this situation. And as every man is responsible for the consequences which he foresaw, or might have foreseen, and for no other, this guilt will be in proportion to the probability of such consequences ensuing. From which principle results the following rule, *viz.* that the guilt of any action in a drunken man bears the same proportion to the guilt of the like action in a sober man, that the probability of its being the consequence of drunkenness bears to absolute certainty. By virtue of this rule, those vices which are the *known* effects of drunkenness, either in general, or upon particular constitutions, are, in all, or in men of such constitutions, nearly as criminal as if committed with all their faculties and senses about them.

If the privation of reason be only partial, the guilt will be of a mixed nature. For so much of his self-government as the drunkard retains, he is as responsible then as at any other time. He is entitled to no abatement beyond the strict proportion in which his moral faculties are impaired. Now I call the guilt of the crime, if a sober man had committed it, the *whole* guilt. A person in the condition we describe incurs part of this at the instant of perpetration; and by bringing himself into such a condition, he incurred that fraction of the remaining part, which the danger of this consequence was of an integral certainty. For the sake of illustration, we are at liberty to suppose, that a man loses half his moral faculties by drunkenness; this leaving him but half his responsibility, he incurs, when he commits the action, half of the whole guilt. We will also suppose that it was known beforehand, that it was an even chance, or half a certainty, that this crime would follow his getting drunk. This makes him chargeable with half of the remainder; so that, altogether, he is responsible in three-fourths of the guilt which a sober man would have incurred by the same action.

I do not mean that any real case can be reduced to numbers, or the calculation be ever made with arithmetical precision; but these are the principles, and this is the rule, by which our general admeasurement of the guilt of such offences should be regulated.

The appetite for intoxicating liquors appears to me to be almost always *acquired*. One proof of which is, that it is apt to return only at particular times and places; as after dinner, in the evening, on the market-day, at the market-town, in such a company, at such a tavern. And this may be the reason that, if a habit of drunkenness be ever overcome, it is upon some change of place, situation, company, or profession. A man sunk deep in a habit of drunkenness will, upon such occasions as these, when he finds himself loosened from the associations which held him fast, sometimes make a plunge, and get out. In a matter of so great importance, it is well worth while, where it is in any degree practicable, to change our habitation and society, for the sake of the experiment.

Habits of drunkenness commonly take their rise either from a fondness for, and connexion with, some company, or some companion, already addicted to this practice; which affords an almost irresistible invitation to take a share in the indulgences which those about us are enjoying with so much apparent relish and delight; or from want of regular employment, which is sure to let in many superfluous cravings and customs, and often this amongst the rest; or, lastly, from grief, or fatigue, both which strongly solicit that relief which inebriating liquors administer, and also furnish a specious excuse for complying with the inclination. But the habit, when once set in, is continued by different motives from those to which it owes its origin. Persons addicted to excessive drinking suffer, in the intervals of sobriety, and near the return of their accustomed indulgence, a faintness and oppression *circa præcordia*, which it exceeds the ordinary patience of human nature to endure. This is usually relieved for a short time by a repetition of the same excess; and to this relief as to the removal of every long continued pain, they who have once experienced it, are urged almost beyond the power of resistance. This is not all: as the liquor loses its *stimulus*, the dose must be increased, to reach the same pitch of elevation, or ease; which increase proportionably accelerates the progress of all the maladies that drunkenness brings on. Whoever reflects upon the violence of the craving in the advanced stages of the habit, and the fatal termination to which the gratification of it leads, will, the moment he perceives in himself the first symptoms of a growing inclination to intemperance, collect his resolution to this point; or (what perhaps he will find his security) arm himself with some peremptory rule, as to the times and quantity of his indulgences. I own myself a friend to the laying down of rules to ourselves of this sort, and rigidly abiding by them. They may be exclaimed against as stiff, but they are often salutary. Indefinite resolutions of abstemiousness are apt to yield to *extraordinary* occasions; and *extraordinary* occasions to occur perpetually. Whereas, the stricter the rule is, the more tenacious we grow of it; and many a man will abstain rather than break his rule, who would not easily to be brought to exercise the same mortification from higher motives. Not to mention, that when our rule is once known, we are provided with an answer to every importunity

There is a difference, no doubt, between convivial intemperance, and that solitary sottishness which waits neither for company nor invitation. But the one, I am afraid, commonly ends in the other; and this last in the basest degradation to which the faculties and dignity of human nature can be reduced

CHAPTER III.

Suicide.

THERE is no subject in morality in which the consideration of *general consequences* is more necessary than in this of suicide. Particular and extreme cases of suicide may be imagined, and may arise, of which it would be difficult to assign the particular mischief, or from that consideration alone to demonstrate the guilt; and these cases have been the chief occasion of confusion and doubtfulness in the question; albeit this is no more than what is sometimes true of the most acknowledged vices. I could propose many possible cases even of murder, which, if they were detached from the general rule, and governed by their own particular consequences alone, it would be no easy undertaking to prove criminal.

The true question in this argument is no other than this: May every man who chooses to destroy his life, innocently do so? Limit and distinguish the subject as you can, it will come at last to this question.

For, shall we say, that we are then at liberty to commit suicide when we find our continuance in life become useless to mankind? Any one who pleases, may make himself useless, and melancholy minds are prone to think themselves useless, when they really are not so. Suppose a law were promulgated, allowing each private person to destroy every man he met, whose longer continuance in the world he judged to be *useless*: who would not condemn the latitude of such a rule? who does not perceive that it amounts to a permission to commit murder at pleasure? A similar rule, regulating the right over our own lives, would be capable of the same extension. Beside which, no one is *useless* for the purpose of this plea, but he who has lost every capacity and opportunity of being useful, together with the possibility of recovering any degree of either; which is a state of such complete destitution and despair, as cannot, I believe, be predicated of any man living.

Or rather, shall we say that to depart voluntarily out of life is lawful for those alone who leave none to lament their death? If this consideration is to be taken into the account at all, the subject of debate will be, not whether there are any to sorrow for us, but whether their sorrow for our death will exceed that which we should suffer by continuing to live. Now this is a comparison of things so indeterminate in their nature, capable of so different a judgment, and concerning which the judgment will differ so much, according to the state of the spirits, or the pressure of any present anxiety, that it would *vary* little, in hypochondriacal constitutions, from an unqualified *licence* to commit suicide, whenever the distresses which men felt, or

fancied, rose high enough to overcome the pain and dread of death. Men are never tempted to destroy themselves but when under the oppression of some grievous uneasiness: the restrictions of the rule therefore ought to apply to these cases. But what effect can we look for from a rule which proposes to weigh our pain against that of another; the misery that is felt against that which is only conceived; and in so corrupt a balance as the party's own distempered imagination?

In like manner, whatever other rule you assign, it will ultimately bring us to an indiscriminate toleration of suicide, in all cases in which there is danger of its being committed. It remains, therefore, to inquire what would be the effect of such a toleration? evidently, the loss of many lives to the community, of which some might be useful or important; the affliction of *many* families, and the consternation of *all*: for mankind must live in continual alarm for the fate of their friends and dearest relations, when the restraints of religion and morality are withdrawn; when every disgust which is powerful enough to tempt men to suicide, shall be deemed sufficient to justify it; and when the follies and vices, as well as the inevitable calamities of human life, so often make existence a burden.

A second consideration, and perfectly distinct from the former, is this: By continuing in the world, and in the exercise of those virtues which remain within our power, we retain the opportunity of meliorating our condition in a future state. This argument, it is true, does not in strictness prove suicide to be a crime; but if it supply a motive to dissuade us from committing it, it amounts to much the same thing. Now there is no condition in human life which is not capable of some virtue, active or passive. Even piety and resignation under the sufferings to which we are called, testify a trust and acquiescence in the Divine counsels, more acceptable, perhaps, than the most prostrate devotion; afford an edifying example to all who observe them; and may hope for a recompense among the most arduous of human virtues. These qualities are always in the power of the miserable; indeed of none but the miserable.

The two considerations above stated, belong to all cases of suicide whatever. Beside which general reasons, each case will be aggravated by its own proper and particular consequences; by the duties that are deserted; by the claims that are defrauded; by the loss, affliction, or disgrace, which our death, or the manner of it, causes our family, kindred, or friends; by the occasion we give to many to suspect the sincerity of our moral and religious professions, and, together with ours, those of all others; by the reproach we draw upon our order, calling, or sect; in a word, by a great variety of evil consequences attending upon peculiar situations, with some or other of which every actual case of suicide is chargeable.

I refrain from the common topics of "deserting our post," "throwing up our trust," "rushing uncalled into the presence of our Maker," with some others of the same sort, not because they are *common* (for that rather affords a presumption in their favour), but because I do not perceive in them much argument to which an answer may not easily be given.

Hitherto we have pursued upon the subject the light of nature

alone; taking however into the account, the expectation of a future existence, without which our reasoning upon this, as indeed all reasoning upon moral questions, is vain; we proceed to inquire, whether any thing is to be met with in Scripture, which may add to the probability of the conclusions we have been endeavouring to support. And here I acknowledge, that there is to be found neither any express determination of the question, nor sufficient evidence to prove that the case of suicide was in the contemplation of the law which prohibited murder. Any inference, therefore, which we deduce from Scripture, can be sustained only by construction and implication: that is to say, although they who were authorized to instruct mankind, have not decided a question which never, so far as appears to us, came before them; yet, I think, they have left enough to constitute a presumption how they would have decided it, had it been proposed or thought of.

What occurs to this purpose, is contained in the following observations:

1. Human life is spoken of as a *term* assigned or prescribed to us: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"—"I have finished my course."—"That I may finish my course with joy."—"Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."—These expressions appear to me inconsistent with the opinion, that we are at liberty to determine the duration of our lives for ourselves. If this were the case, with what propriety could life be called a *race that is set before us*: or, which is the same thing, "*our course*:" that is, the course set out or appointed to us? The remaining quotation is equally strong;—"That, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." The most natural meaning that can be given to the words, "after ye have done the will of God," is, after ye have discharged the duties of life, so long as God is pleased to continue you in it. According to which interpretation, the text militates strongly against suicide: and they who reject this paraphase, will please to propose a better.

2. There is not one quality which Christ and his apostles inculcate upon their followers so often, or so earnestly, as that of patience under affliction. Now this virtue would have been in a great measure superseded, and the exhortations to it might have been spared, if the disciples of his religion had been at liberty to quit the world as soon as they grew weary of the ill usage they received in it. When the evils of life pressed sore, they were to look forward to a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" they were to receive them "as chastenings of the Lord," as intimations of his care and love; by these and the like reflections they were to support and improve themselves under their sufferings; but not a hint has any where escaped of seeking relief in a voluntary death. The following text in particular strongly combats all impatience of distress, of which the greatest is that which prompts to acts of suicide:—"Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." I would offer my comment upon this passage, in these two queries: first, whether a Christian convert, who had been impelled by the continuance and urgency of his sufferings to destroy his own life, would not have been thought by the

author of this text "to have been weary," to have "fainted in his mind," to have fallen off from that example which is here proposed to the meditation of Christians in distress; and yet, secondly, Whether such an act would not have been attended with all the circumstances of mitigation which can excuse or extenuate suicide at this day?

3. The *conduct* of the apostles, and of the Christians of the apostolic age, affords no obscure indication of their sentiments upon this point. They lived, we are sure, in a confirmed persuasion of the existence, as well as of the happiness of a future state. They experienced in this world every extremity of external injury and distress. To die, was gain. The change which death brought with it was, in their expectation, infinitely beneficial. Yet it never, that we can find, entered into the intention of one of them to hasten this change by an act of suicide; from which it is difficult to say what motive could have so universally withheld them, except an apprehension of some unlawfulness in the expedient.

Having stated what we have been able to collect in opposition to the lawfulness of suicide, by way of direct proof, it seems unnecessary to open a separate controversy with all the arguments which are made use of to defend it; which would only lead us into a repetition of what has been offered already. The following argument, however, being somewhat more artificial and imposing than the rest, as well as distinct from the general consideration of the subject, cannot so properly be passed over. If we deny to the individual a right over his own life, it seems impossible, it is said, to reconcile with the law of nature that right which the state claims and exercises over the lives of its subjects, when it ordains or inflicts capital punishments. For this right, like all other just authority in the state, can only be derived from the compact and virtual consent of the citizens which compose the state; and it seems self-evident, if any principle in morality be so, that no one, by his consent, can transfer to another a right which he does not possess himself. It will be equally difficult to account for the power of the state to commit its subjects to the dangers of war, and to expose their lives without scruple in the field of battle; especially in offensive hostilities, in which the privileges of self-defence cannot be pleaded with any appearance of truth: and still more difficult to explain, how in such, or in any circumstances, prodigality of life can be a virtue, if the preservation of it be a duty of our nature.

This whole reasoning sets out from one error, namely, that the state acquires its right over the life of the subject from the subject's own consent, as a part of what orginally and personally belonged to himself, and which he has made over to his governors. The truth is, the state derives this right neither from the consent of the subject, nor through the medium of that consent; but, as I may say, immediately from the donation of the Deity. Finding that such a power in the sovereign of the community is expedient, if not necessary, for the community itself, it is justly presumed to be the will of God, that the sovereign should possess and exercise it. It is this *presumption* which constitutes the right; it is the same indeed which constitutes every other: and if they were the

like reasons to authorize the presumption in the case of private persons, suicide would be as justifiable as war, or capital executions. But until it can be shown that the power over human life may be converted to the same advantage in the hands of individuals over their own, as in those of the state over the lives of its subjects, and that it may be intrusted with equal safety to both, there is no room for arguing, from the existence of such a right in the latter, to the toleration of it in the former

BOOK V.

DUTIES TOWARDS GOD.

CHAPTER I.

Division of these Duties.

IN one sense, every duty is a duty towards to God, since it is his will which makes it a duty: but there are some duties of which God is the object, as well as the author; and these are peculiarly, and in a more appropriated sense, called *duties towards God.*

That silent piety, which consists in a habit of tracing out the Creator's wisdom and goodness in the objects around us, or in the history of his dispensations; of referring the blessings we enjoy to his bounty, and of resorting in our distresses to his succour; may possibly be more acceptable to the Deity than any visible expressions of devotion whatever. Yet these latter (which, although they may be excelled, are not superseded, by the former) compose the only part of the subject which admits of direction or disquisition from a moralist.

Our duty towards God, so far as it is external, is divided into *worship* and *reverence.* God is the immediate object of both; and the difference between them is, that the one consists in action, the other in forbearance. When we go to church on the Lord's day, led thither by a sense of duty towards God, we perform an act of worship; when, from the same motive, we rest in a journey upon that day, we discharge a duty of reverence.

Divine worship is made up of adoration, thanksgiving, and prayer. —But, as what we have to offer concerning the two former may be observed of prayer, we shall make that the title of the following chapters, and the direct subject of our consideration.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Duty and of the Efficacy of Prayer, so far as the same appear from the Light of Nature.

WHEN one man desires to obtain any thing of another, he betakes himself to entreaty; and this may be observed of mankind in all ages and countries of the world. Now what is universal, may be called natural; and it seems probable that God, as our supreme governor, should expect that towards himself, which by a natural impulse, or by the irresistible order of our constitution, he has prompted us to pay to every other being on whom we depend.

The same may be said of thanksgiving.

Prayer likewise is necessary to keep up in the minds of mankind a sense of God's agency in the universe, and of their own dependency upon him.

Yet, after all, the duty of prayer depends upon its efficacy: for I confess myself unable to conceive, how any man can pray, or be obliged to pray, who expects nothing from his prayer; but who is persuaded at the time he utters his request, that it cannot possibly produce the smallest impression upon the being to whom it is addressed, or advantage to himself. Now the efficacy of prayer imports that we obtain something in consequence of praying, which we should not have received without prayer; against all expectation of which the following objection has been often and seriously alleged:—"If it be most agreeable to perfect wisdom and justice that we should receive what we desire, God, as perfectly wise and just, will give it to us without asking; if it be not agreeable to these attributes of his nature our entreaties cannot move him to give it us, and it were impious to expect that they should." In fewer words, thus: "If what we request be fit for us, we shall have it without praying; if it be not fit for us, we cannot obtain it by praying." This objection admits but of one answer, namely, that it may be agreeable to perfect wisdom to grant that to our prayers which it would not have been agreeable to the same wisdom to have given us without praying for. But what virtue, you will ask, is there in prayer, which should make a favour consistent with wisdom, which would not have been so without it? To this question, which contains the whole difficulty attending the subject, the following possibilities are offered in reply;

1. A favour granted to prayer may be more apt, on that very account, to produce good effects upon the person obliged. It may hold in the Divine bounty, what experience has raised into a proverb in the collation of human benefits, that what is obtained without asking, is oftentimes received without gratitude.

2. It may be consistent with the wisdom of the Deity to withhold his favours till they be asked for, as an expedient to encourage devotion in his rational creation, in order thereby to keep up and circulate a knowledge and sense of their dependency upon *him*.

3. Prayer has a natural tendency to amend the petitioner himself; and thus to bring him within the rules which the wisdom of the Deity has prescribed to the dispensation of his favours.

If these, or any other assignable suppositions, serve to remove the

apparent repugnancy between the success of prayer and the character of the Deity, it is enough; for the question with the petitioner is not from which, out of many motives, God may grant his petition, or in what particular manner he is moved by the supplications of his creatures; but whether it be consistent with his nature to be moved at all, and whether there be any conceivable motives which may dispose the Divine will to grant the petitioner what he wants, in consequence of his praying for it. It is sufficient for the petitioner, that he gain his end. It is not necessary to devotion, perhaps not very consistent with it, that the circuit of causes, by which his prayers prevail, should be known to the petitioner, much less that they should be present to his imagination at the time. All that is necessary is, that there be no impossibility apprehended in the matter.

Thus much must be conceded to the objection; that prayer cannot reasonably be offered to God with all the same views, with which we oftentimes address our entreaties to men, (views which are not commonly or easily separated from it), *viz.* to inform them of our wants and desires: to tease them out by importunity; to work upon their indolence or compassion, in order to persuade them to do what they ought to have done before, or ought not to do at all.

But suppose there existed a prince, who was known by his subjects to act, of his own accord, always and invariably for the best; the situation of a petitioner, who solicited a favour or pardon from such a prince, would sufficiently resemble ours: and the question with him, as with us, would be, whether, the character of the prince being considered, there remained any chance that he should obtain from him by prayer, what he would not have received without it? I do not conceive that the character of such a prince would necessarily exclude the effect of his subject's prayers; for when that prince reflected, that the earnestness and humility of the supplication had generated in the suppliant a frame of mind, upon which the pardon or favour asked would produce a permanent and active sense of gratitude; that the granting of it to prayer would put others upon praying to him, and by that means preserve the love and submission of his subjects, upon which love and submission their own happiness, as well as his glory, depended; that, beside that the memory of the particular kindness would be heightened and prolonged by the anxiety with which it had been sued for, prayer had in in other respects so disposed and prepared the mind of the petitioner, as to render capable of future services him, who before was unqualified for any: might not that prince, I say, although he proceeded upon no other considerations than the strict rectitude and expediency of the measure, grant a favour or pardon to *this man*, which he did not grant to *another*, who was too proud, too lazy, or too busy, too indifferent whether he received it or not, or too insensible of the sovereign's absolute power, to give or to withhold it, ever to ask for it? or even to the *philosopher*, who, from an opinion of the fruitlessness of all addresses to a prince of the character which he had formed to himself, refused in his own example, and discouraged in others, all outward returns of gratitude, acknowledgements of duty, or application to the sovereign's mercy, or bounty; the disuse of which (seeing affections do not long subsist which are never expressed) was followed by a decay of loyalty and

zeal amongst his subjects, and threatened to end in a forgetfulness of his rights, and a contempt of his authority? These, together with other assignable considerations, and some perhaps inscrutable, and even inconceivable, by the persons upon whom his will was to be exercised, might pass in the mind of the prince, and move his counsels; whilst nothing, in the mean time, dwelt in the petitioner's thoughts, but a sense of his own grief and wants; of the power and goodness from which alone he was to look for relief; and of his obligation to endeavour, by future obedience, to render that person propitious to his happiness, in whose hands, and at the disposal of whose mercy, he found himself to be.

The objection to prayer supposes, that a perfectly wise being must necessarily be inexorable: but where is the proof, that *inexorability* is any part of perfect wisdom; especially of that wisdom which is explained to consist in bringing about the most beneficial ends by the wisest means?

The objection likewise assumes another principle, which is attended with considerable difficulty and obscurity, namely, that upon every occasion there is *one*, and only *one*, mode of acting *for the best*; and that the Divine Will is necessarily determined and confined to that mode: both which positions presume a knowledge of universal nature, much beyond what we are capable of attaining. Indeed when we apply to the Divine Nature such expressions as these, "God *must* always do what is right." "God *cannot* from the moral perfection and necessity of his nature, act otherwise than for the best," we ought to apply them with much indeterminateness and reserve; or rather, we ought to confess, that there is something in the subject out of the reach of our apprehension; for, in our apprehension, to be under a necessity of acting according to any rule, is inconsistent with free agency; and it makes no difference which we can understand, whether the necessity be internal or external, or that the rule is the rule of perfect rectitude.

But efficacy is ascribed to prayer without the proof, we are told, which can alone in such a subject produce conviction,—the confirmation of experience. Concerning the appeal to experience, I shall content myself with this remark, that if prayer were suffered to disturb the order of second causes appointed in the universe too much, or to produce its effects with the same regularity that they do, it would introduce a change into human affairs, which in some important respects would be evidently for the worse. Who, for example would labour, if his necessities could be supplied with equal certainty by prayer? How few would contain within any bounds of moderation those passions and pleasures, which at present are checked only by disease, or the dread of it, if prayer would infallibly restore health? In short, if the efficacy of prayer were so constant and observable as to be relied upon *beforehand*, it is easy to foresee that the conduct of mankind would, in proportion to that reliance, become careless and disorderly. It is possible, in the nature of things, that our prayers may, in many instances, be efficacious, and yet our experience of their efficacy be dubious and obscure. Therefore if the light of nature instruct us by any other arguments to hope for effect from prayer; still more, if the Scriptures authorize

these hopes by promises of acceptance; it seems not a sufficient reason for calling in question the reality of such effects, that our observations of them are ambiguous; especially since it appears probable, that this very ambiguity is necessary to the happiness and safety of human life.

But some, whose objections do not exclude all prayer, are offended with the mode of prayer in use amongst us, and with many of the subjects which are almost universally introduced into public worship, and recommended to private devotion. To pray for particular favours by name, is to dictate, it has been said, to Divine wisdom and goodness: to intercede for others, especially for whole nations and empires, is still worse; it is to presume that we possess such an interest with the Deity, as to be able, by our applications, to bend the most important of his counsels; and that the happiness of others, and even the prosperity of communities, is to depend upon this interest, and upon our choice. Now, how unequal soever our knowledge of the Divine economy may be to the solution of this difficulty, which requires perhaps a comprehension of the entire plan, and of all the ends, of God's moral government, to explain satisfactorily, we can understand one thing concerning it,—that it is, after all, nothing more than the making of one man the instrument of happiness and misery to another; which is perfectly of a piece with the course and order that obtain, and which we must believe were intended to obtain in human affairs. Why may we not be assisted by the prayers of other men, who are beholden for our support to their labour? Why may not our happiness be made in some cases to depend upon the intercession, as it certainly does in many upon the good offices, of our neighbours? The happiness and misery of great numbers we see oftentimes at the disposal of one man's choice, or liable to be much affected by his conduct; what greater difficulty is there in supposing, that the prayers of an individual may avert a calamity from multitudes, or be accepted to the benefit of whole communities?

CHAPTER III.

Of the Duty and Efficacy of Prayer as represented in Scripture.

THE reader will have observed, that the reflections stated in the preceding chapter, whatever truth and weight they may be allowed to contain, rise many of them no higher than to negative arguments in favour of the propriety of addressing prayer to God. To prove that the efficacy of prayers is not inconsistent with the attributes of the Deity, does not prove that prayers are actually efficacious: and in the want of that unequivocal testimony, which experience alone could afford to this point (but which we do not possess, and have seen good reason why we are not to expect), the light of nature leaves us to controverted probabilities, drawn from the impulse by which mankind have been almost universally prompted to devotion, and from some beneficial purposes, which, it is conceived may be better answered by

the audience of prayer than by any other mode of communicating the same blessings. The revelations which we deem authentic, completely supply this defect of natural religion. They require prayer to God as a duty; and they contain positive assurance of its efficacy and acceptance. We could have no reasonable motive for the exercise of prayer, without believing that it may avail to the relief of our wants. This belief can only be founded, either in a sensible experience of the effect of prayer, or in promises of acceptance signified by Divine authority. Our knowledge would have come to us in the former way, less capable indeed of doubt, but subjected to the abuses and inconveniences briefly described above; in the latter way, that is, by authorized significations of God's general disposition to hear and answer the devout supplications of his creatures, we are encouraged to pray, but not to place such a dependance upon prayer as might relax other obligations, or confound the order of events and human expectations.

The Scriptures not only affirm the propriety of prayer in general, but furnish precepts or examples which justify some topics and some modes of prayer that have been thought exceptionable. And as the whole subject rests so much upon the foundation of Scripture, I shall put down at length texts applicable to the five following heads: to the duty and efficacy of prayer in general; of prayer for particular favours by name: for public national blessings; of intercession for others; of the repetition of unsuccessful prayers.

1. Texts enjoining prayer in general; "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find.—If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?"—"Watch ye, therefore, and *pray always*, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."—"Serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, *continuing instant in prayer*."—"Be careful for nothing, but in every thing *by prayer and supplication*, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "I will, therefore, that men *pray every where;* lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting."—*Pray without ceasing.* Matt. vii. 7. 11.; Luke xxi. 36.; Rom. xii. 12.; Philip. iv. 6.; 1 Thess. v. 17.; 1 Tim. ii. 8. Add to these, that Christ's reproof of the ostentation and prolixity of pharisaical prayers, and his recommendation to his disciples, of retirement and simplicity in theirs, together with his dictating a particular form of prayer, all presuppose prayer to be an acceptable and availing service.

2. Examples of prayer for particular favours by name; "For this thing" (to wit, some bodily infirmity, which he calls 'a thorn given him in the flesh') "I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me."—"Night and day praying exceedingly, that we *might see your face*, and perfect that which is lacking in your faith." 2. Cor. xii. 8.; 1 Thess. iii. 10.

3. Directions to pray for natural or public blessings: "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*" "Ask ye of the Lord rain, in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."—"I exhort, there-

fore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty: for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." Pslam cxxii. 6.; Zech. x. 1.; 1 Tim. ii. 1—3.

4. Examples of intercession, and exhortations to intercede, for others:—"And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people? Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."—"Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God *for him*." "For God is my witness, that without ceasing *I make mention of you always in my prayers*."—"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your *prayers for me*."—"Confess your faults one to another, and *pray one for another*, that ye may be healed: the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Exod. xxxii. 11.; Acts xii. 5.; Rom. i. 9. xv. 30.; James v. 16.

5. Declarations and examples authorizing the repetition of unsuccessful prayer: "And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." "And he left them and went away again, and prayed *the third time, saying the same words*."—"For this thing I besought the Lord *thrice*, that it might depart from me." Luke xviii. 1.; Matt. xxvi. 44.; 2 Cor. xii. 8.*

CHAPTER IV.

Of Private Prayer, Family Prayer, and Public Worship

CONCERNING these three descriptions of devotion, it is first of all to be observed, that each has its separate and peculiar use; and therefore, that the exercise of one species of worship, however regular it be, does not supersede, or dispense with, the obligation of either of the other two.

I. *Private prayer*, is recommended for the sake of the following advantages:

Private wants cannot always be made the subject of public prayer; but whatever reason there is for praying at all, there is the same for making the sore and grief of each man's own heart the business of his application to God. This must be the office of private exer-

* The reformed churches of Christendom, sticking close in this article to their guide, have laid aside prayers for the dead, as authorized by no precept or precedent found in Scripture. For the same reason, they properly reject the invocation of saints; as also because such invocations suppose, in the saints whom they address, a knowledge which can perceive what passes in different regions of the earth at the same time. And they deem it too much to take for granted, without the smallest intimation of such a thing in Scripture, that any created being possesses a faculty little short of that omniscience and omnipresence which they ascribe to the Deity.

cises of devotion, being imperfectly, if at all, practicable in any others.

Private prayer is generally more devout and earnest than the share we are capable of taking in joint acts of worship; because it affords leisure and opportunity for the circumstantial recollection of those personal wants, by the remembrance and ideas of which the warmth and earnestness of prayer are chiefly excited.

Private prayer, in proportion as it is usually accompanied with more actual thought and reflection of the petitioner's own, has a greater tendency than other modes of devotion to revive and fasten upon the mind the general impressions of religion. Solitude powerfully assists this effect. When a man finds himself alone in communication with his Creator, his imagination becomes filled with a conflux of awful ideas concerning the universal agency, and invisible presence, of that Being; concerning what is likely to become of himself; and of the superlative importance of providing for the happiness of his future existence, by endeavours to please him who is the arbiter of his destiny: reflections which, whenever they gain admittance, for a season overwhelm all others; and leave, when they depart, a solemnity upon the thoughts that will seldom fail, in some degree, to affect the conduct of life.

Private prayer, thus recommended by its own propriety, and by advantages not attainable in any form of religious communion, receives a superior sanction from the authority and example of Christ; "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."—"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain *apart to pray.*" Matt. vi. 6. xiv. 23.

II. *Family prayer.*

The peculiar use of family piety consists in its influence upon servants, and the young members of a family, who want sufficient seriousness and reflection to retire of their own accord to the exercise of private devotion, and whose attention you cannot easily command in public worship. The example also and authority of a father and master act in this way with the greatest force; for his private prayers, to which his children and servants are not witnesses, act not at all upon them as examples; and his attendance upon public worship they will readily impute to fashion, to a care to preserve appearances, to a concern for decency and character, and to many motives besides a sense of duty to God. Add to this, that forms of public worship, in proportion as they are more comprehensive, are always less interesting, than family prayers; and that the ardour of devotion is better supported, and the sympathy more easily propagated, through a small assembly, connected by the affections of domestic society, than in the presence of a mixed congregation.

III. *Public worship.*

If the worship of God be a duty of religion, public worship is a necessary institution: forasmuch as, without it, the greater part of mankind would exercise no religious worship at all.

These assemblies afford also, at the same time, opportunities for moral and religious instruction to those who otherwise would receive

none. In all Protestant, and in most Christian countries, the elements of natural religion, and important parts of the evangelic history, are familar to the lowest of the people. This competent degree and general diffusion of religious knowledge amongst all orders of Christians, which will appear a great thing when compared with the intellectual condition of barbarous nations, can fairly, I think, be ascribed to no other cause than the regular establishment of assemblies for divine worship; in which, either portions of Scripture are recited and explained, or the principles of Christian erudition are so constantly taught in sermons, incorporated with liturgies, or expressed in extempore prayer, as to imprint, by the very repetition, some knowledge and memory of these subjects upon the most unqualified and careless hearer.

The two reasons above stated, bind all the members of a community, to uphold public worship by their presence and example, although the helps and opportunities which it affords may not be necessary to the devotion or edification of all; and to some may be useless; for it is easily foreseen, how soon religious assemblies would fall into contempt and disuse, if that class of mankind who are above seeking instruction in them, and want not that their own piety should be assisted by either forms or society in devotion, were to withdraw their attendance, especially when it is considered, that all who please, are at liberty to rank themselves of this class. This argument meets the only serious apology that can be made for the absenting of ourselves from public worship. "Surely (some will say) I may be excused from going to church, so long as I pray at home; and have no reason to doubt that my prayers are as acceptable and efficacious in my closet, as in a cathedral; still less, can I think myself obliged to sit out a tedious sermon, in order to hear what is known already, what is better learnt from books, or suggested by meditation." They, whose qualifications and habits best supply to themselves all the effect of public ordinances, will be the last to prefer this excuse, when they advert to the *general consequence* of setting up such an exemption, as well as when they consider the turn which is sure to be given in the neighbourhood to their absence from public worship. You stay from church, to employ the sabbath at home in exercises and studies suited to its proper business: your next neighbour stays from church to spend the seventh day less religiously than he passed any of the six, in a sleepy, stupid rest, or at some rendezvous of drunkenness and debauchery, and yet thinks that he is only imitating you, because you both agree in not going to church. The same consideration should overrule many small scruples concerning the rigorous propriety of some things, which may be contained in the forms, or admitted in the administration, of the public worship of our communion: for it seems impossible that even "two or three should be gathered together" in any act of social worship, if each one require from the rest an implicit submission to his objections, and if no man will attend upon a religious service which in any point contradicts his opinion of truth, or falls short of his ideas of perfection.

Beside the direct necessity of public worship to the greater part of every Christian community (supposing worship at all to be a Christian

duty), there are other valuable advantages growing out of the use of religious assemblies, without being designed in the institution, or thought of by the individuals who compose them.

1. Joining in prayer and praises to their common Creator and Governor, has a sensible tendency to unite mankind together, and to cherish and enlarge the generous affections.

So many pathetic reflections are awakened by every exercise of social devotion, that most men, I believe, carry away from public worship a better temper towards the rest of mankind, than they brought with them. Sprung from the same extraction, preparing together for the period of all worldly distinctions, reminded of their mutual infirmities, and common dependency, imploring and receiving support and supplies from the same great source of power and bounty, having all one interest to secure, one Lord to serve, one judgment, the supreme object to all of their hopes and fears, to look towards; it is hardly possible, in this position, to behold mankind as strangers, competitors or enemies; or not to regard them as children of the same family, assembled before their common parent, and with some portion of the tenderness which belongs to the most endearing of our domestic relations. It is not to be expected, that any single effect of this kind should be considerable or lasting; but the frequent return of such sentiments as the presence of a devout congregation naturally suggest, will gradually melt down the ruggedness of many unkind passions, and may generate in time a permanent and productive benevolence.

2. Assemblies for the purpose of divine worship, placing men under impressions by which they are taught to consider their relation to the Deity, and to contemplate those around them with a view to that relation, force upon their thoughts the natural equality of the human species, and thereby promote humility and condescension in the highest orders of the community, and inspire the lowest with a sense of their rights. The distinctions of civil life are almost always insisted upon too much, and urged too far. Whatever, therefore, conduces to restore the level, by qualifying the dispositions which grow out of great elevation or depression of rank, improves the character on both sides. Now things are made to appear little, by being placed beside what is great. In which manner, superiorities, that occupy the whole field of imagination, will vanish or shrink to their proper diminutiveness, when compared with the distance by which even the highest of men are removed from the Supreme Being; and this comparison is naturally introduced by all acts of joint worship. If ever the poor man holds up his head, it is at church; if ever the rich views him with respect, it is there; and both will be the better, and the public profited, the oftener they meet in a situation, in which the consciousness of dignity in the one is tempered and mitigated, and the spirit of the other erected and confirmed. We recommend nothing adverse to subordinations which are established and necessary; but then it should be remembered, that subordination itself is an evil, being an evil to the subordinate, who are the majority, and therefore ought not to be carried a tittle beyond what the greater good, the peaceable government of the community, requires.

The public worship of Christians is a duty of divine appointment "Where two or three," says Christ, "are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* This invitation will want nothing of the force of a command with those who respect the person and authority, from which it proceeds. Again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews; "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;"† which reproof seems as applicable to the desertion of our public worship at this day, as to the forsaking the religious assemblies of Christians in the age of the apostle. Independently of these passages of Scripture, a disciple of Christianity will hardly think himself at liberty to dispute a practice set on foot by the inspired preachers of his religion, coeval with its institution, and retained by every sect into which it has been since divided.

CHAPTER V.

Of Forms of Prayer in Public Worship.

LITURGIES, or preconcerted forms of public devotion, being neither enjoined in Scripture, nor forbidden, there can be no good reason for either receiving or rejecting them, but that of expediency; which expediency is to be gathered from a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages attending upon this mode of worship, with those which usually accompany extemporary prayer.

The advantages of a liturgy are these:

I. That it prevents absurd, extravagant, or impious addresses to God, which, in an order of men so numerous as the sacerdotal, the folly and enthusiasm of many must always be in danger of producing, where the conduct of the public worship is intrusted, without restraint or assistance, to the discretion and abilities of the officiating minister.

II. That it prevents the *confusion* of extemporary prayer, in which the congregation being ignorant of each petition before they hear it, and having little or no time to join in it after they have heard it, are confounded between their attention to the minister, and to their own devotion. The devotion of the hearer is necessarily suspended, until a petition be concluded; and before he can assent to it, or properly adopt it, that is, before he can address the same request to God, for himself, and from himself, his attention is called off to keep pace with what succeeds. Add to this, that the mind of the hearer is held in continual expectation, and detained from its proper business, by the very novelty with which it is gratified. A congregation may be pleased and affected with the prayers and devotion of their minister, without joining in them; in like manner as an audience oftentimes are with the representation of devotion upon the stage, who, nevertheless, come away without being conscious of having exercised any act of devotion themselves. *Joint* prayer, which amongst all denominations of Christians is the declared design of "coming toge-

* Matt. xviii. 20. † Heb. x. 25.

ther," is prayer in which all *join;* and not that which one alone in the congregation conceives and delivers, and of which the rest are merely hearers. This objection seems fundamental, and holds even where the minister's office is discharged with every possible advantage and accomplishment. The labouring recollection, and embarrassed or tumultuous delivery, of many extempore speakers, form an additional objection to this mode of public worship: for these imperfections are very general, and give great pain to the serious part of a congregation, as well as afford a profane diversion to the levity of the other part.

These advantages of a liturgy are connected with two principal inconveniences: first, that forms of prayer composed in one age become unfit for another, by the unavoidable change of language, circumstances and opinions; secondly, that the perpetual repetition of the same form of words produces weariness and inattentivenes in the congregation. However both these inconveniences are in their nature vincible. Occasional revisions of a liturgy may obviate the first, and devotion will supply a remedy for the second; or they may both subsist in a considerable degree, and yet be outweighed by the objections which are inseparable from extemporary prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is a precedent, as well as a pattern, for forms of prayer. Our Lord appears, if not to have prescribed, at least to have authorized, the use of fixed forms, when he complied with the request of the disciple who said unto him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Luke xi. 1.

The properties required in a public liturgy are, that it be compendious; that it express just conceptions of the Divine Attributes; that it recites such wants as a congregation are likely to feel and no other: and that it contain as few controverted propositions as possible.

1. That it be compendious.

It were no difficult task to contract the liturgies of most churches into half their present compass, and yet retain every distinct petition, as well as the substance of every sentiment, which can be found in them. But brevity may be studied too much. The composer of a liturgy must not sit down to his work with the hope, that the devotion of the congregation will be uniformly sustained throughout, or that every part will be attended to by every hearer. If this could be depended upon, a very short service would be sufficient for every purpose that can be answered or designed by social worship: but seeing the attention of most men is apt to wander and return at intervals, and by starts, he will admit a certain degree of amplification and repetition, of diversity of expression upon the same subject, and variety of phrase and form with little addition to the sense, to the end that the attention, which has been slumbering or absent during one part of the service, may be excited and recalled by another; and the assembly kept together until it may reasonably be presumed, that the most heedless and inadvertent have performed some act of devotion, and the most desultory attention been caught by some part or other of the public service. On the other hand, the too great length of church-services is more unfavourable to piety, than almost any fault of composition can be. It begets, in many, an early and unconquerable

dislike to the public worship of their country or communion. They come to church seldom; and enter the doors, when they do come, under the apprehension of a tedious attendance, which they prepare for at first, or soon after relieve, by composing themselves to a drowsy forgetfulness of the place and duty, or by sending abroad their thoughts in search of more amusing occupation. Although there may be some few of a disposition not to be wearied with religious exercises: yet, where a ritual is prolix, and the celebration of divine service long, no effect is in general to be looked for, but that indolence will find in it an excuse, and piety be disconcerted by impatience.

The length and repetitions complained of in our liturgy, are not so much the fault of the compilers, as the effect of uniting into *one* service what was originally, but with very little regard to the conveniency of the people, distributed into *three*. Notwithstanding that dread of innovations in religion, which seems to have become the *panic* of the age, few, I should suppose, would be displeased with such omissions, abridgments, or change in the arrangement, as the combination of separate services must necessary require, even supposing each to have been faultless in itself. If, together with these alterations, the Epistles and Gospels, and Collects which precede them, were composed and selected with more regard to unity of subject and design; and the Psalms and Lessons either left to the choice of the minister, or better accommodated to the capacity of the audience, and the edification of modern life; the church of England would be in possession of a liturgy, in which those who assent to her doctrines would have little to blame, and the most dissatisfied must acknowledge many beauties. The style throughout is excellent; calm, without coldness; and, though every where sedate, oftentimes affecting. The pauses in the service are disposed at proper intervals. The transitions from one office of devotion to another, from confession to prayer, from prayer to thanksgiving, from thanksgiving to "hearing of the word," are contrived like scenes in the drama, to supply the mind with a succession of diversified engagements. As much variety is introduced also in the form of prayer, as this kind of composition seems capable of admitting. The prayer at one time is continued; at another, broken by responses, or cast into short alternate ejaculations: and sometimes the congregation is called upon to take its share in the service, by being left to complete a sentence which the minister had begun. The enumeration of human wants and sufferings in the Litany, is almost complete. A Christian petitioner can have few things to ask of God, or to deprecate, which he will not find there expressed, and for the most part with inimitable tenderness and simplicity

II. That it express just conceptions of the Divine Attributes.

This is an article in which no care can be too great. The popular notions of God are formed, in a great measure from the accounts which the people receive of his nature and character in their religious assemblies. An error here, becomes the error of multitudes, and as it is a subject in which almost every opinion leads the way to some practical consequence, the purity or depravation of public manners will be affected, amongst other causes, by the truth or corruption of the public forms of worship.

III. That it recite such wants as the congregation are likely to feel, and no other.

Of forms of prayer which offend not egregiously against truth and decency, that has the most merit, which is best calculated to keep alive the devotion of the assembly. It were to be wished, therefore, that every part of a liturgy were personally applicable to every individual in the congregation; and that nothing were introduced to interrupt the passion, or damp the flame which it is not easy to rekindle. Upon this principle, the *state prayers* in our liturgy should be fewer and shorter. Whatever may be pretended, the congregation do not feel that concern in the subject of these prayers, which must be felt ere ever prayers be made to God with earnestness. The *state style* likewise seems unseasonably introduced into these prayers, as ill according with that annihilation of human greatness, of which every act that carries the mind to God, presents the idea.

IV. That it contain as few controverted propositions, as possible.

We allow to each church the truth of its peculiar tenets, and all the importance which zeal can ascribe to them. We dispute not here the right or the expediency of framing creeds, or of imposing subscriptions. But why should every position which a church maintains, be woven with so much industry into her forms of public worship? Some are offended, and some are excluded; this is an evil of itself, at least to *them:* and what advantage or satisfaction can be derived to the *rest,* from the separation of their brethren, it is difficult to imagine; unless it were a duty to publish our system of polemic divinity, under the name of making confession of our faith, every time we worship God; or a sin to agree in religious exercises, with those from whom we differ in some religious opinions. Indeed, where one man thinks it his duty constantly to worship a being, whom another cannot, with the assent of his conscience, permit himself to worship at all, there seems to be no place for comprehension, or any expedient left but a quiet secession. All other differences may be compromised by silence. If sects and schisms be an evil, they are as much to be avoided by one side as the other. If sectaries are blamed for taking unnecessary offence, established churches are no less culpable for unnecessarily giving it; they are bound at least to produce a command, or a reason of equivalent utility, for shutting out any from their communion, by mixing with divine worship doctrines, which, whether true or false, are unconnected in their nature with devotion.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Use of Sabbatical Institutions.

AN assembly cannot be collected, unless the time of assembling be fixed and known beforehand: and if the design of the assembly require that it be holden frequently, it is easiest it should return at stated intervals. This produces a necessity of appropriating set seasons to the social offices of religion. It is also highly convenient that the *same* seasons be observed throughout the country, that all may be

employed, or all at leisure, together; for if the recess from worldly occupation be not general, one man's business will perpetually interfere with another man's devotion; the buyer will be calling at the shop when the seller is gone to church. This part, therefore, of the religious distinction of seasons, namely, a general intermission of labour and business during times previously set apart for the exercise of public worship, is founded in the reasons which make public worship itself a duty. But the celebration of divine service never occupies the whole day. What remains, therefore, of Sunday, beside the part of it employed at church, must be considered as a mere rest from the ordinary occupations of civil life; and he who would defend the institution, as it is required by law to be observed in Christian countries, unless he can produce a command for a *Christian Sabbath*, must point out the uses of it in that view.

First, then, that interval of relaxation which Sunday affords to the laborious part of mankind, contributes greatly to the comfort and satisfaction of their lives, both as it refreshes them for the time, and as it relieves their six days' labour by the prospect of a day of rest, always approaching; which could not be said of *casual* indulgences of leisure and rest, even were they more frequent than there is reason to expect they would be if left to the discretion or humanity of interested task-masters. To this difference it may be added, that holy-days which come seldom and unexpected, are unprovided, when they do come, with any duty or employment; and the manner of spending them being regulated by no public decency or established usage, they are commonly consumed in rude, if not criminal pastimes, in stupid sloth, or brutish intemperance. Whoever considers how much sabbatical institutions conduce, in this respect, to the happiness and civilization of the labouring classes of mankind, and reflects how great a majority of the human species these classes compose, will acknowledge the utility, whatever he may believe of the origin, of this distinction; and will consequently perceive it to be every man's duty to uphold the observation of Sunday, when once established, let the establishment have proceeded from whom or from what authority it will.

Nor is there any thing lost to the community by the intermission of public industry one day in the week. For, in countries tolerably advanced in population and the arts of civil life, there is always enough of human labour, and to spare. The difficulty is not so much to procure, as to employ it. The addition of the seventh day's labour to that of the other six, would have no other effect than to reduce the price. The labourer himself, who deserved and suffered most by the change, would gain nothing.

2. Sunday, by suspending many public diversions, and the ordinary rotation of employment, leaves to men of all ranks and professions sufficient leisure, and not more than what is sufficient, both for the external offices of Christianity, and the retired, but equally necessary duties of religious meditation and inquiry. It is true, that many do not convert their leisure to this purpose; but it is of moment, and is all which a public constitution can effect, that to every one be allowed the opportunity.

3. They, whose humanity embraces the whole sensitive creation,

will esteem it no inconsiderable recommendation of a weekly return of public rest, that it affords a respite to the toil of brutes. Nor can we omit to recount this among the uses which the Divine Founder of the *Jewish* sabbath expressly appointed a law of the institution.

We admit, that none of these reasons shew why Sunday should be preferred to any other day in the week, or one day in seven to one day in six, or eight; but these points, which in their nature are of arbitrary determination, being established to our hands, our obligation applies to the subsisting establishment, so long as we confess that some such institution is necessary, and are neither able, nor attempt to substitute any other in its place.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Scripture Account of Sabbatical Institutions.

THE subject, so far as it makes any part of Christian morality, is contained in two questions:

I. Whether the command, by which the Jewish sabbath was instituted, extends to Christians?

II. Whether any new command was delivered by Christ; or any other day substituted in the place of the Jewish sabbath by the authority or example of his apostles?

In treating of the first question, it will be necessary to collect the accounts which are preserved of the institution in the Jewish history: for the seeing these accounts together, and in one point of view; will be the best preparation for the discussing or judging of any arguments on one side or the other.

In the second chapter of Genesis, the historian, having concluded his account of the six days' creation, proceeds thus: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made: and God *blessed* the seventh day and *sanctified* it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." After this we hear no more of the sabbath or of the seventh day, as in any manner distinguished from the other six, until the history brings us down to the sojourning of the Jews in the wilderness, when the following remarkable passage occurs. Upon the complaint of the people for want of food, God was pleased to provide for their relief by a miraculous supply of manna, which was found every morning upon the ground about the camp; "and they gathered it, every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted; and it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses; and he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, *To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord:* bake that which ye will bake, to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe: and that which remaineth over, lay up for you, to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, [as it had done before, when

some of them left it till the morning], neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; *for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord:* to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day, for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, *for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath*, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place: let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." Exodus xvi.

Not long after this, the sabbath, as is well known, was established with great solemnity, in the fourth commandment.

Now, in my opinion, the transaction in the wilderness above recited, was the first actual institution of the sabbath. For if the sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in Genesis may seem at first sight to import; and if it had been observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand five hundred years; it appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscurest allusion to it, should occur, either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham, which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, and those extremely abridged; or, which is more to be wondered at, in that of the lives of the first three Jewish patriarchs, which in many parts of the account, is sufficiently circumstantial and domestic. Nor is there, in the passage above quoted from the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, any intimation that the sabbath, when appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution, which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended; nor is any such neglect imputed either to the inhabitants of the whole world, or to any part of the family of Noah; nor, lastly, is any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency.

The passage in the second chapter of Genesis, which creates the whole controversy upon the subject, is not inconsistent with this opinion: for, as the seventh day was erected into a sabbath, on account of God's resting upon that day from the work of the creation, it was natural enough in the historian, when he had related the history of the creation, and of God's ceasing from it on the seventh day, to add: "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that on it he had rested from all his work which God created and made;" although the blessing and sanctification, *i. e.* the religious distinction and appropriation of that day, were not actually made till many ages afterward. The words do not assert, that God *then* "blessed" and "sanctified" the seventh day, but that he blessed and sanctified it *for that reason*: and if any ask, why the sabbath, or sanctification of the seventh day, was *then* mentioned, if it was not *then* appointed, the answer is at hand: the order of connexion, and not of time, introduced the mention of the Sabbath, in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate.

This interpretation is strongly supported by a passage in the pro-

phet Ezekiel, where the sabbath is plainly spoken of as *given* (and what else can that mean, but as *first instituted*?) in the wilderness. "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness: and I gave them my statutes and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them: moreover also I *gave them my sabbaths*, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Ezek. xx. 10—12.

Nehemiah also recounts the promulgation of the sabbatic law amongst the transactions in the wilderness; which supplies another considerable argument in aid of our opinion;—"Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments, *and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath*, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant, and gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock."* Nehem. ix. 12—15.

If it be required what duties were appointed for the Jewish sabbath, and under what penalties and in what manner it was observed amongst the ancient Jews; we find that, by the fourth commandment, a strict cessation from work was enjoined, not only upon Jews by birth, or religious profession, but upon all who resided within the limits of the Jewish state; that the same was to be permitted to their slaves and their cattle: that this rest was not to be violated, under pain of death; "Whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death." Exod. xxxi. 15. Beside which, the seventh day was to be solemnized by double sacrifices in the temple:—"And on the sabbath-day *two* lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof; this is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering and his drink-offering." Numb. xxviii. 9. 10. Also *holy convocations*, which mean, we presume, assemblies for the purpose of public worship or religious instruction, were directed to be holden on the sabbath day; "the seventh day is a sabbath of rest, a holy convocation." Levit. xxiii. 3.

And accordingly we read, that the sabbath was in fact observed amongst the Jews by a scrupulous abstinence from every thing which by any possible construction, could be deemed labour; as from dressing meat, from travelling beyond a sabbath-day's journey, or about a single mile. In the Maccabean wars, they suffered a thousand of their number to be slain, rather than do any thing in their own defence on the sabbath-day. In the final siege of Jerusalem, after they had so

* From the mention of the sabbath in so close a connexion with the descent of God upon mount Sinai, and the delivery of the law from thence, one would be inclined to believe, that Nehemiah referred solely to the fourth commandment. But the fourth commandment certainly did not first make known the sabbath. And it is apparent, that Nehemiah observed not the order of events, for he speaks of what passed upon mount Sinai before he mentions the miraculous supplies of bread and water, though the Jews did not arrive at mount Sinai till some time after both these miracles were wrought.

far overcome their scruples as to defend their persons when attacked, they refused any operation on the sabbath-day, by which they might have interrupted the enemy in filling up the trench. After the establishment of synagogues (of the origin of which we have no account), it was the custom to assemble in them on the sabbath day, for the purpose of hearing the law rehearsed and explained, and for the exercise, it is probable, of public devotion: "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, *being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.*" The seventh day is *Saturday:* and agreeably to the Jewish way of computing the day, the sabbath held from six o'clock on the Friday evening, to six o'clock on Saturday evening.—These observations being premised, we approach the main question, Whether the command by which the Jewish sabbath was instituted, extend to us?

If the Divine command was actually delivered at the creation, it was addressed, no doubt, to the whole human species alike, and continues unless repealed by some subsequent revelation, binding upon all who come to the knowledge of it. If the command was published for the first time in the wilderness, then it was immediately directed to the Jewish people alone; and something farther, either in the subject or circumstances of the command, will be necessary to shew, that it was designed for any other. It is on this account, that the question concerning the date of the institution was first to be considered. The former opinion precludes all debate about the extent of the obligation; the latter admits, and, *primâ facie*, induces a belief, that the sabbath ought to be considered as part of the peculiar law of the Jewish policy.

Which belief receives great confirmation from the following arguments:

The sabbath is described as sign between God and the people of Israel:—"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant; *it is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever.*" Exodus xxxi. 16. 17. Again: "And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do he shall even live in them; *moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them,* that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Ezek. xx. 12. Now it does not seem easy to understand how the sabbath could be a *sign* between God and the people of Israel, unless the observance of it was peculiar to that people, and designed to be so.

The distinction of the sabbath is, in its nature, as much a positive ceremonial institution, as that of many other seasons which were appointed by the Levitical law to be kept holy, and to be observed by a strict rest; as the first and seventh days of unleavened bread; the feast of Pentecost; the feast of Tabernacles: and in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, the sabbath and these are recited together.

If the command by which the sabbath was instituted be binding upon Christians, it must be binding as to the day, the duties, and the penalty; in none of which it is received.

The observance of the sabbath was not one of the articles enjoined by the apostles, in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, upon them "which from among the Gentiles, were turned unto God."

St. Paul evidently appears to have considered the sabbath as part of the Jewish ritual, and not obligatory upon Christians as such:—"Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or *of the sabbath days*, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." Col. ii. 16, 17.

I am aware of only two objections which can be opposed to the force of these arguments: one is, that the reason assigned in the fourth commandment for hallowing the seventh day, namely, "because God rested on the seventh day from the work of the creation," is a reason which pertains to all mankind; the other, that the command which enjoins the observance of the sabbath is inserted in the Decalogue, of which all the other precepts and prohibitions are of moral and universal obligation.

Upon the first objection it may be remarked, that although in Exodus the commandment is founded upon God's rest from the creation, in Deuteronomy the commandment is repeated with a reference to a different event:—"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou; and remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm; *therefore* the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day." It is farther observable, that God's rest from the creation is proposed as the reason of the institution, even where the institution itself is spoken of as peculiar to the Jews;—"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant: it is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: *for* in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." The truth is, these different reasons were assigned to account for different circumstances in the command. If a Jew inquired, why the *seventh day* was sanctified rather than the sixth or eighth, — his law told him, because God rested on the *seventh day* from the creation. If he asked, why was the same rest indulged to *slaves*? his law bade him remember, that he also was a *slave* in the land of Egypt, and, "that the Lord his God brought him out thence." In this view, the two reasons are perfectly compatible with each other, and with a third end of the institution, its being a *sign* between God and the people of Israel; but in this view they determine nothing concerning the extent of the obligation. If the reason by its proper energy had constituted a natural obligation, or if it had been mentioned with a view to the extent of the obligation, we should submit to the conclusion that all were comprehended by the command who are concerned in the reason. But the sabbatic rest being a duty which results from the ordination and authority of a positive law, the reason can be alleged no farther than as it explains the design of the legislator: and if it appear to be recited with an intentional application to one part of the law, it explains his design upon no other; if it be mentioned merely to account for the choice of the day, it does not explain *the design* as to the extent of the obligation.

With respect to the second objection, that inasmuch as the other nine commandments are confessedly of moral and universal obligation, it may reasonably be presumed that this is of the same; we answer, that this argument will have less weight, when it is considered that the distinction between positive and natural duties like other distinctions of modern ethics, was unknown to the simplicity of ancient language; and that there are various passages in Scripture, in which duties of a political, or ceremonial, or positive nature, and confessedly of partial obligation, are enumerated, and without any mark of discrimination, along with others which are natural and universal. Of this the following is an incontestible example. "But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right; and hath not eaten upon the mountains, nor hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel; neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, *neither hath come near to a menstruous woman:* and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge; hath spoiled none by violence; hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; *he that hath not given upon usury, neither hath taken any increase:* that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity; hath executed true judgment between man and man; hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel xviii. 5—9. The same thing may be observed of the apostolic decree recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts:—"It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and *from fornication*; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well."

II. If the law by which the sabbath was instituted, was a law only to the Jews, it becomes an important question with the Christian inquirer, whether the founder of his religion delivered any new command upon the subject; or, if that should not appear to be the case, whether any day was appropriated to the service of religion by the authority or example of his apostles.

The practice of holding religious assemblies upon the first day of the week, was so early and universal in the Christian Church, that it carries with it considerable proof of having originated from some precept of Christ, or of his apostles, though none such be now extant. It was upon the *first* day of the week that the disciples were assembled, when Christ appeared to them for the first time after his resurrection; "then the same day at evening, *being the first day of the week*, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst of them." John xx. 19. This, for any thing that appears in the account, might, as to the day, have been accidental; but in the 26th verse of the same chapter we read that "after eight days," that is, on the *first* day of the week *following*, "*again* the disciples were within;" which second meeting upon the same day of the week looks like an appointment and design to meet on that particular day. In the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we find the same custom in a Christian church at a great distance from Jerusalem:—"And we came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days; and *upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread*, Paul preached unto them."

Acts xx. 6. 7. The manner in which the historian mentions the disciples coming together to break bread on the *first day* of the week, shews, I think, that the practice by this time was familiar and established. St. Paul to the Corinthians writes thus: "Concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye; *upon the first day of the week* let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come." 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Which direction affords a probable proof, that the *first* day of the week was already amongst the Christians both of Corinth and Galatia, distinguished from the rest by some religious application or other. At the time that St. John wrote the book of his Revelation, the first day of the week had obtained the name of the *Lord's day*;—"I was in the spirit," says he, "*on the Lord's day*." Rev. i. 10. Which name and St. John's use of it, sufficiently denote the appropriation of this day to the service of religion, and that this appropriation was perfectly known to the churches of Asia. I make no doubt that by the *Lord's day* was meant the *first* day of the week; for we find no footsteps of any distinction of days which could entitle any other to that appellation. The subsequent history of Christianity corresponds with the accounts delivered on this subject in Scripture.

It will be remembered, that we are contending, by these proofs, for no other duty upon the first day of the week, than that of holding and frequenting religious assemblies. A cessation upon that day from labour, beyond the time of attendance upon public worship, is not intimated in any passage of the New Testament; nor did Christ or his apostles deliver, that we know of, any command to their disciples for a discontinuance upon that day, of the common offices of their profession; a reserve which none will see reason to wonder at, or to blame as a defect in the institution, who consider that, in the primitive condition of Christianity, the observance of a new sabbath would have been useless, or inconvenient, or impracticable. During Christ's personal ministry, his religion was preached to the Jews alone. *They* already had a sabbath, which, as citizens and subjects of that economy, they were obliged to keep; and did keep. It was not therefore probable that Christ would enjoin another day of rest in conjunction with this. When the new religion came forth into the Gentile world, converts to it were, for the most part, made from those classes of society who have not their time and labour at their own disposal; and it was scarcely to be expected, that unbelieving masters and magistrates, and they who directed the employment of others, would permit their slaves and labourers to rest from their work every seventh day; or that civil government, indeed, would have submitted to the loss of the seventh part of the public industry, and that too in addition to the numerous festivals which the national religions indulged to the people; at least, this would have been an encumbrance, which might have greatly retarded the reception of Christianity in the world. In reality, the institution of a weekly sabbath is so connected with the functions of civil life, and requires so much of the concurrence of civil law in its regulation and support, that it cannot, perhaps, properly be made the ordinance of any religion, till that religion be received as the religion of the state.

The opinion, that Christ and his apostles meant to retain the duties

of the Jewish sabbath, shifting only the day from the seventh to the first, seems to prevail without sufficient proof; nor does any evidence remain in Scripture (of what, however, is not improbable), that the first day of the week was thus distinguished in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection.

The conclusion from the whole inquiry (for it is our business to follow the arguments, to whatever probability they conduct us) is this: The *assembling* upon the first day of the week for the purpose of public worship and religious instruction, is a law of Christianity of Divine appointment; the *resting* on that day from our employments longer than we are detained from them by attendance upon these assemblies, is to Christians an ordinance of human institution; binding nevertheless upon the conscience of every individual of a country in which a weekly sabbath is established, for the sake of the beneficial purposes which the public and regular observance of it promotes, and recommended perhaps in some degree to the Divine approbation, by the resemblance it bears to what God was pleased to make a solemn part of the law which he delivered to the people of Israel, and by its subserviency to many of the same uses.

CHAPTER VIII.

By what Acts and Omissions the Duty of the Christian Sabbath is Violated.

SINCE the obligation upon Christians to comply with the religious observance of Sunday, arises from the public uses of the institution, and the authority of the apostolic practice, the *manner* of observing it ought to be that which best fulfils *these* uses, and conforms the nearest to *this* practice.

The uses proposed by the institution are:

1. To facilitate attendance upon public worship.
2. To meliorate the condition of the laborious classes of mankind, by regular and seasonable returns of rest.
3. By a general suspension of business and amusement, to invite and enable persons of every description to apply their time and thoughts to subjects appertaining to their salvation.

With the primitive Christians, the peculiar, and probably for some time the only, distinction of the first day of the week, was the holding of religious assemblies upon that day. We learn, however, from the testimony of a very early writer amongst them, that they also reserved the day for religious meditations;—*Unusquisque nostrûm* (saith Irenæus) *sabbatizat spiritualiter, meditatione legis gaudens, opificium Dei admirans.*

WHEREFORE the duty of the day is violated.

1st, By all such employments or engagements as (though differing from our ordinary occupation) hinder our attendance upon public worship, or take up so much of our time as not to leave a sufficient part of the day at leisure for religious reflection; as the going of journeys, the paying or receiving of visits which engage the whole day, or em-

ploying the time at home in writing letters, settling accounts, or in applying ourselves to studies, or the reading of books, which bear no relation to the business of religion.

2ndly, By unnecessary encroachments on the rest and liberty which Sunday ought to bring to the inferior orders of the community; as by keeping servants on that day confined and busied in preparations for the superfluous elegancies of our table, or dress.

3dly, By such recreations as are customarily forborne out of respect to the day; as hunting, shooting, fishing, public diversions, frequenting taverns, playing at cards or dice.

If it be asked, as it often has been, wherein consists the difference between walking out with your staff, or with your gun? between spending the evening at home, or in a tavern; between passing the Sunday afternoon at a game of cards, or in conversation not more edifying, nor always so inoffensive?—to these, and to the same question under a variety of forms, and in a multitude of similar examples, we return the following answer: that the religious observance of Sunday, if it ought to be retained at all, must be upholden by some public and visible distinctions: that, draw the line of distinction where you will, many actions which are situated on the confines of the line, will differ very little, and yet lie on the opposite sides of it:—that every trespass upon that reserve which public decency has established, breaks down the fence by which the day is separated to the service of religion:—that it is unsafe to trifle with scruples and habits that have a beneficial tendency, although founded merely in custom:—that these liberties, however intended, will certainly be considered by those who observe them, not only as disrespectful to the day and institution, but as proceeding from a secret contempt of the Christian faith:—that, consequently, they diminish a reverence for religion in others, so far as the authority of our opinion, or the efficacy of our example, reaches; or rather, so far as either will serve for an excuse of negligence to those who are glad of any: that as to cards and dice, which put in their claim to be considered among the *harmless* occupations of a vacant hour, it may be observed that few find any difficulty in refraining from *play* on Sunday, except they who sit down to it with the views and eagerness of gamesters:—that *gaming* is seldom innocent;—that the anxiety and perturbations, however, which it excites, are inconsistent with the tranquillity and frame of temper in which the duties and thoughts of religion should always both find and leave us: and lastly we shall remark, that the example of other countries, where the same or greater licence is *allowed*, affords no apology for irregularities in our own; because a practice which is tolerated by public usage, neither receives the same construction nor gives the same offence, as where it is censured and prohibited.

CHAPTER IX.

Of Reverencing the Deity.

IN many persons, a seriousness, and sense of awe, overspread the imagination, whenever the idea of the Supreme Being is presented to their thoughts. This effect, which forms a considerable security against vice, is the consequence not so much of reflection, as of habit; which habit being generated by the external expressions of reverence which we use ourselves, or observe in others, may be destroyed by causes opposite to these, and especially by that familiar levity with which some learn to speak of the Deity, of his attributes, providence, revelations, or worship.

God hath been pleased (no matter for what reason, although probably for this) to forbid the vain mention of his name:—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Now the mention is *vain*, when it is useless; and it is useless, when it is neither likely nor intended to serve any good purpose; as when it flows from the lips idle and unmeaning, or is applied, on occasions inconsistent with any consideration of religion and devotion, to express our anger, our earnestness, our courage, or our mirth; or indeed when it is used at all, except in acts of religion, or in serious and seasonable discourses upon religious subjects.

The prohibition of the third commandment is recognised by Christ, in his sermon upon the mount; which sermon adverts to none but the moral parts of the Jewish law:—"I say unto you, Swear not at all: but let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil." The Jews probably interpreted the prohibition as restrained to the name JEHOVAH, the name which the Deity had appointed and appropriated to himself; Exod. vi. 3. The words of Christ extend the prohibition beyond the *name* of God, to every thing associated with the idea:—"Swear not, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King." Matt. v. 35.

The offence of profane swearing is aggravated by the consideration, that in *it* duty and decency are sacrificed to the slenderest of temptations. Suppose the habit, either from affectation, or by negligence and inadvertency, to be already formed, it must always remain within the power of the most ordinary resolution to correct it; and it cannot, one would think, cost a great deal to relinquish the pleasure and honour which it confers. A concern for duty is in fact never strong, when the exertion requisite to vanquish a habit founded in no antecedent propensity is thought too much, or too painful.

A contempt of positive duties, or rather of those duties for which the reason is not so plain as the command, indicates a disposition upon which the authority of revelation has obtained little influence.—This remark is applicable to the offence of profane swearing, and describes, perhaps, pretty exactly, the general character of those who are most addicted to it.

Mockery and ridicule, when exercised upon the Scriptures, or even upon the places, persons, and forms, set apart for the ministration of

religion, fall within the meaning of the law which forbids the profanation of God's name; especially as that law is extended by Christ's interpretation. They are moreover inconsistent with a religious frame of mind: for, as no one ever either feels himself disposed to pleasantry, or capable of being diverted with the pleasantry of others, upon matters in which he is deeply interested; so a mind intent upon the acquisition of heaven, rejects with indignation every attempt to entertain it with jests, calculated to degrade or deride subjects which it never recollects but with seriousness and anxiety. Nothing but stupidity, or the most frivolous dissipation of thought, can make even the inconsiderate forget the supreme importance of every thing which relates to the expectation of a future existence. Whilst the infidel mocks at the superstitions of the vulgar, insults over their credulous fears, their childish errors, or fantastic rites, it does not occur to him to observe, that the most preposterous device by which the weakest devotee ever believed he was securing the happiness of a future life, is more rational than unconcern about it. Upon this subject, nothing is so absurd as indifference;—no folly so contemptible, as thoughtlessness and levity.

Finally, the knowledge of what is due to the solemnity of those interests, concerning which revelation professes to inform and direct us, may teach even those who are least inclined to respect the prejudices of mankind, to observe a decorum in the style and conduct of religious disquisitions, with the neglect of which many adversaries of Christianity are justly chargeable. Serious arguments are fair on all sides. Christianity is but ill defended by refusing audience or toleration to the objections of unbelievers. But whilst we would have freedom of inquiry restrained by no laws but those of decency, we are entitled to demand, on behalf of a religion which holds forth to mankind assurances of immortality, that its credit be assailed by no other weapons than those of sober discussion and legitimate reasoning:—that the truth or falsehood of Christianity be never made a topic of raillery, a theme for the exercise of wit or eloquence, or a subject of contention for literary fame and victory;—that the cause be tried upon its merits: that all applications to the fancy, passions, or prejudices, of the reader; all attempts to preoccupy, insnare, or perplex his judgment, by any art, influence, or impression whatsoever, extrinsic to the proper grounds and evidence upon which his assent ought to proceed, be rejected from a question which involves in its determination the hopes, the virtue, and the repose, of millions:—that the controversy be managed on both sides with sincerity; that is, that nothing be produced, in the writings of either, contrary to, or beyond the writer's own knowledge and persuasion:—that objections and difficulties be proposed, from no other motive than an honest and serious desire to obtain satisfaction, or to communicate information which may promote the discovery and progress of truth:—that in conformity with this design, every thing be stated with integrity, with method, precision and simplicity: and above all, that whatever is published in opposition to received and confessedly beneficial persuasions, be set forth under a form which is likely to invite inquiry and to meet examination. If with these moderate and equitable conditions be compared the manner in which hostilities have been waged against the Christian religion, not only the votaries of the

prevailing faith, but every man who looks forward with anxiety to the destination of his being, will see much to blame and to complain of. By *one unbeliever*, all the follies which have adhered, in a long course of dark and superstitious ages, to the popular creed, are assumed as so many doctrines of Christ and his apostles, for the purpose of subverting the whole system by the absurdities which it is *thus* represented to contain. By *another*, the ignorance and vices of the sacerdotal order, their mutual dissentions and persecutions, their usurpations and encroachments upon the intellectual liberty and civil rights of mankind have been displayed by no small triumph and invective; not so much to guard the Christian laity against a repetition of the same injuries (which is the only proper use to be made of the most flagrant examples of the past), as to prepare the way for an insinuation, that the religion itself is nothing but a profitable fable, imposed upon the fears and credulity of the multitude, and upheld by the frauds and influence of an interested and crafty priesthood. And yet, how remotely is the character of the clergy connected with the truth of Christianity! What, after all, do the most disgraceful pages of ecclesiastical history prove, but that the passions of our common nature are not altered or excluded by distinctions of name, and that the characters of men are formed much more by the temptations than the duties of their profession? A *third* finds delight in collecting and repeating accounts of wars and massacres, of tumults and insurrections excited in almost every age of the Christian era by religious zeal; as though the vices of Christians were parts of Christianity; intolerance and extirpation precepts of the gospel: or as if its spirit could be judged of from the counsels of princes, the intrigues of statesmen, the pretences of malice and ambition, or the unauthorized cruelties of some gloomy and virulent superstition. By a *fourth*, the succession and variety of popular religions: the vicissitudes with which sects and tenets have flourished and decayed; the zeal with which they were once supported, the negligence with which they are now remembered; the little share which reason and argument appear to have had in framing the creed, or regulating the religious conduct, of the multitude; the indifference and submission with which the religion of the state is generally received by the common people; the caprice and vehemence with which it is sometimes opposed; the frenzy with which men have been brought to contend for opinions and ceremonies, of which they knew neither the proof, the meaning, nor the original: lastly, the equal and undoubting confidence with which we hear the doctrines of Christ or of Confucius, of the law of Moses or of Mahomet, the Bible, the Koran, or the Shaster, maintained or anathematized, taught or abjured, revered or derided, according as we live on this or on that side of a river: keep within or step over the boundaries of a state; or even in the same country, and by the same people, so often as the event of a battle, or the issue of a negotiation, delivers them to the dominion of a new master;—points, I say, of this sort are exhibited to the public attention, as so many arguments against the *truth* of the Christian religion;—and with success. For these topics being brought together, and set off with some aggravation of circumstances, and with a vivacity of style and description familiar enough to the writings and conversation of free-thinkers, insensibly lead the imagination into a habit of classing

Christianity with the delusions that have taken possession, by turns, of the public belief: and of regarding it as what the scoffers of our faith represent it to be, *the superstition of the day*. But is this to deal honestly by the subject, or with the world? May not the same thing be said, may not the same prejudices be excited by these representations, whether Christianity be true or false, or by whatever proofs its truth be attested? May not truth as well as falsehood be taken upon credit? May not a religion be founded upon evidence accessable and satisfactory to every mind competent to the inquiry, which yet, by the greatest part of its professors, is received upon authority?

But if the *matter* of these objections be reprehensible, as calculated to produce an effect upon the reader beyond what their real weight and place in the argument deserve, still more shall we discover of management and disingenousness in the *form* under which they are dispersed among the public. Infidelity is served up in every shape that is likely to allure, surprise, or beguile, the imagination; in a fable, a tale, a novel, a poem; in interspersed and broken hints, remote and oblique surmises; in books of travels, of philosophy, of natural history; in a word, in any form rather than the right one, that of a professed and regular disquisition. And because the coarse buffoonery, and broad laugh, of the old and rude adversaries of the Christian faith, would offend the taste, perhaps, rather than the virtue, of this cultivated age, a graver irony, a more skilful and delicate banter, is substituted in their place. An eloquent historian, beside his more direct, and therefore fairer, attacks upon the credibility of evangelic story, has contrived to weave into his narration one continued sneer upon the cause of Christianity, and upon the writings and characters of its ancient patrons. The knowledge which this author possesses of the frame and conduct of the human mind, must have led him to observe, that such attacks do their execution without inquiry. Who can refute a *sneer*? Who can compute the number, much less, one by one, scrutinize the justice, of those disparaging insinuations which crowd the pages of this elaborate history? What reader suspends his curiosity, or calls off his attention from the principal narrative, to examine references, to search into the foundation, or to weigh the reason, propriety, and force, of every transient sarcasm, and sly allusion, by which the Christian testimony is depreciated and traduced; and by which, nevertheless, he may find his persuasion afterward unsettled and perplexed?

But the enemies of Christianity have pursued her with poisoned arrows. Obscenity itself is made the vehicle of infidelity. The awful doctrines, if we be not permitted to call them the sacred truths, of our religion, together with all the adjuncts and appendages of its worship and external profession, have been sometimes impudently profaned by an unnatural conjunction with impure and lascivious images. The fondness for ridicule is almost universal: and ridicule to many minds is never so irresistible, as when seasoned with obscenity, and employed upon religion. But in proportion as these noxious principles take hold of the imagination, they infatuate the judgment; for trains of ludicrous and unchaste associations adhering to every sentiment and mention of religion, render the mind indisposed to receive either conviction from its evidence, or impressions from its authority. And this effect being exerted upon the sensitive part of our frame, is altogether independ-

ent of argument, proof, or reason; is as formidable to a true religion, as to a false one: to a well-grounded faith, as to a chimerical mythology, or fabulous tradition. Neither, let it be observed, is the crime or danger less, because impure ideas are exhibited under a veil, in covert and chastised language.

Seriousness is not constraint of thought: nor levity freedom. Every mind which wishes the advancement of truth and knowledge, in the most important of all human researches, must abhor this licentiousness, as violating no less the laws of reasoning, than the rights of decency. There is but one description of men, to whose principles it ought to be tolerable; I mean that class of reasoners who can see *little* in Christianity, even supposing it to be true. To such adversaries we address this reflection:—Had Jesus Christ delivered no other declaration than the following. "The hour is coming, in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation;"—he had pronounced a message of inestimable importance, and well worthy of that splendid apparatus of prophecy and miracles with which his mission was introduced and attested; a message in which the wisest of mankind would rejoice to find an answer to their doubts, and rest to their inquiries. It is idle to say, that a future state had been discovered already:---it had been discovered, as the Copernican system was;---it was one guess among many. He alone discovers, who *proves:* and no man can prove this point, but the teacher who testifies by miracles that his doctrine comes from God.

BOOK VI.

ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Origin of Civil Government.

GOVERNMENT, at first, was either, patriarchal or military: that of a parent over his family, or of a commander over his fellow-warriors.

1. Paternal authority, and the order of domestic life, supplied the foundation of *civil government.* Did mankind spring out of the earth mature and independent, it would be found perhaps impossible to introduce subjection and subordination among them: but the condition of human infancy prepares men for society, by combining individuals into small communities, and by placing them from the beginning, under direction and control. A family contains the rudiments of an empire. The authority of one over many, and the disposition to govern and to be governed, are in this way incidental to the very nature, and coeval no doubt, with the existence, of the human species.

Moreover, the constitution of families not only assists the formation of civil government, by the dispositions which it generates, but also furnishes the first steps of the process by which empires have been actually reared. A parent would retain a considerable part of his authority, after his children were grown up, and had formed families of their own. The obedience of which they remembered not the beginning, would be considered as natural; and would scarcely, during the parent's life, be entirely or abruptly withdrawn. Here then we see the second stage in the progress of dominion. The first was, that of a parent over his young children; this, that of an ancestor presiding over his adult descendants.

Although the original progenitor was the centre of union to his posterity, yet it is not probable that the association would be immediately or altogether dissolved by his death. Connected by habits of intercourse and affection, and by some common rights, necessities and interests, they would consider themselves as allied to each other in a nearer degree than to the rest of the species. Almost all would be sensible of an inclination to continue in the society in which they had been brought up; and experiencing, as they soon would do, many inconveniences from the absence of that authority which their com-

mon ancestor exercised, especially in deciding their disputes, and directing their operations in matters in which it was necessary to act in conjunction they might be induced to supply his place by a formal choice of a successor; or rather might willingly, and almost imperceptibly transfer their obedience to some one of the family, who by his age or services, or by the part he possessed in the direction of their affairs during the lifetime of the parent, had already taught them to respect his advice, or to attend to his commands; or lastly, the prospect of these inconveniences might prompt the first ancestor to appoint a successor; and his posterity, from the same motive, united with an habitual deference to the ancestor's authority, might receive the appointment with submission. Here then we have a tribe or clan incorporated under one chief. Such communities might be increased by considerable numbers, and fulfil the purposes of civil union without any other or more regular convention, constitution, or form of government, than what we have described. Every branch which was slipped off from the primitive stock, and removed to a distance from it, would in like manner take root, and grow into a separate clan. Two or three of these clans were frequently, we may suppose, united into one. Marriage, conquest, mutual defence, common distress, or more accidental coalitions, might produce this effect.

II. A second source of personal authority, and which might easily extend, or sometimes perhaps supersede, the patriarchal, is that which results from military arrangement. In wars, either of aggression or defence, manifest necessity would prompt those who fought on the same side to array themselves under one leader. And although their *leader* was advanced to this eminence for the purpose only, and during the operations, of a single expedition, yet his authority would not always terminate with the reasons for which it was conferred. A warrior who had led forth his tribe against their enemies with repeated success, would procure to himself, even in the deliberations of peace, a powerful and permanent influence. If this advantage were added to the authority of the patriarchal chief, or favoured by any previous distinction of ancestry, it would be no difficult undertaking for the person who possessed it to obtain the almost absolute direction of the affairs of the community; especially if he was careful to associate to himself proper auxiliaries, and content to practise the obvious art of gratifying or removing those who opposed his pretensions.

But although we may be able to comprehend how by his personal abilities or fortune one man may obtain the rule over many, yet it seems more difficult to explain how empire became *hereditary*, or in what manner sovereign power, which is never acquired without great merit or management, learns to descend in a succession which has no dependance upon any qualities either of understanding or activity.

The causes which have introduced hereditary dominion into so general a reception in the world, are principally the following;—the influence of association, which communicates to the son a portion of the same respect which was wont to be paid to the virtues or station of the father; the mutual jealousy of other competitors; the greater envy with which all behold the exaltation of an equal, than the continuance of an acknowledged superiority; a reigning prince leaving behind him many adherents, who can preserve their own importance

only by supporting the succession of his children: add to these reasons, that elections to the supreme power having, upon trial, produced destructive contentions, many states would take refuge from a return of the same calamities in a rule of succession; and no rule presents itself so obvious, certain, and intelligible, as consanguinity of birth.

The ancient state of society in most countries, and the modern condition of some uncivilized parts of the world, exhibit that appearance which this account of the origin of civil government would lead us to expect. The earliest histories of Palestine, Greece, Italy, Gaul, Britain, inform us, that these countries were occupied by many small independent nations, not much perhaps unlike those which are found at present amongst the savage inhabitants of North America, and upon the coast of Africa. These nations I consider as the amplifications of so many single families; or as derived from the junction of two or three families, whom society in war, or the approach of some common danger, had united. Suppose a country to have been first peopled by shipwreck on its coasts, or by emigrants or exiles from a neighbouring country: the new settlers, having no enemy to provide against, and occupied with the care of their personal subsistence, would think little of digesting a system of laws, of contriving a form of government, or indeed of any political union whatever; but each settler would remain at the head of his own family, and each family would include all of every age and generation who were descended from him. So many of these families as were holden together after the death of the original ancestor, by the reasons and in the method above recited, would wax, as the individuals were multiplied, into tribes, clans, hordes, or nations, similar to those into which the ancient inhabitants of many countries, are known to have been divided, and which are still found wherever the state of society and manners is immature and uncultivated.

Nor need we be surprised at the early existence in the world of some vast empires, or at the rapidity with which they advanced to their greatness from comparatively small and obscure originals. Whilst the inhabitants of so many countries were broken into numerous communities, unconnected, and oftentimes contending with each other: before experience had taught these little states to see their own danger in their neighbour's ruin; or had instructed them in the necessity of resisting the aggrandizement of an aspiring power, by alliances and timely preparations; in this condition of civil policy, a particular tribe, which by any means had gotten the start of the rest in strength or discipline, and happened to fall under the conduct of an ambitious chief, by directing their first attempts to the part where success was most secure, and by assuming, as they went along, those whom they conquered into a share of their future enterprises, might soon gather a force which would infallibly overbear any opposition that the scattered power and unprovided state of such enemies could make to the progress of their victories.

Lastly, our theory affords a presumption, that the earliest governments were monarchies, because the government of families, and of armies, from which, according to our account, civil government derived its institutions, and probably its form, is universally monarchical.

CHAPTER II.

How Subjection to Civil Government is Maintained

COULD we view our own species from a distance, or regard mankind with the same sort of observation with which we read the natural history, or remark the *manners*, of any other animal, there is nothing in the human character which would more surprise us, than the almost universal subjugation of strength to weakness;—than to see many millions of robust men, in the complete use and exercise of their personal faculties, and without any defect of courage, waiting upon the will of a child, a woman, a driveller, or a lunatic. And although, when we suppose a vast empire in absolute subjection to one person, and that one depressed beneath the level of his species by infirmities or vice, we suppose perhaps an extreme case: yet in all cases, even in the most popular forms of civil government, *the physical strength resides in the governed.* In what manner opinion thus prevails over strength, or how power, which naturally belongs to superior force, is maintained in opposition to it; in other words, by what motives the many are induced to submit to the few, becomes an inquiry which lies at the root of almost every political speculation. It removes, indeed, but does not resolve, the difficulty, to say that civil governments are now a-days almost universally upholden by standing armies; for the question, still returns; How are these armies themselves kept in subjection, or made to obey the commands, and carry on the designs, of the prince or state which employs them.

Now, although we should look in vain for any *single* reason which will account for the general submission of mankind to civil government; yet it may not be difficult to assign for every class and character in the community, considerations powerful enough to dissuade each from any attempts to resist established authority. Every man has his motive, though not the same. In this, as in other instances, the conduct is similar, but the principles which produce it, extremely various.

There are three distinctions of character, into which the subjects of a state may be divided: into those who obey from prejudice; those who obey from reason; and those who obey from self-interest.

I. They who obey from prejudice, are determined by an opinion of right in their governors; which opinion is founded upon *prescription.* In monarchies and aristocracies which are hereditary, the prescription operates in favour of particular families; in republics and elective offices in favour of particular forms of government, or constitutions. Nor is it to be wondered at, that mankind should reverence authority founded in prescription, when they observe that it is prescription which confers the title to almost every thing else. The whole course, and all the habits of civil life, favour this prejudice. Upon what other foundation stands any man's right to his estate? The right of primogeniture, the succession of kindred, the descent of property, the inheritance of honours, the demand of tithes, tolls,

rents, or services, from the estates of others, the right of way, the powers of office and magistracy, the privileges of nobility, the immunities of the clergy, upon what are they all founded, in the apprehension at least of the multitude, but upon prescription? To what else, when the claims are contested, is the appeal made? It is natural to transfer the same principle to the affairs of government, and to regard those exertions of power, which have been long exercised and acquiesced in, as so many *rights* in the sovereign; and to consider obedience to his commands, within certain accustomed limits, as enjoined by that rule of conscience, which requires us to render to every man his due.

In hereditary monarchies, the *prescriptive title* is corroborated, and its influence considerably augmented, by an accession of religious sentiments, and by that sacredness which men are wont to ascribe to the person of princes. Princes themselves have not failed to take advantage of this disposition, by claiming a superior dignity, as it were, of nature, or a peculiar delegation from the Supreme Being. For this purpose were introduced the titles of Sacred Majesty, of God's Anointed, Representative, Vicegerent, together with the ceremonies of investitures and coronations, which are calculated not so much to recognise the authority of sovereigns, as to consecrate their persons. Where a fabulous religion permitted it, the public veneration has been challenged by bolder pretensions. The Roman emperors usurped the titles and arrogated the worship of gods. The mythology of the heroic ages, and of many barbarous nations, was easily converted to this purpose. Some princes, like the heroes of Homer, and the founder of the Roman name, derived their birth from the gods; others with Numa, pretended a secret communication with some divine being; and others again, like the incas of Peru, and the ancient Saxon kings, extracted their descent from the deities of their country. The Lama of Thibet, at this day, is held forth to his subjects, not as the offspring or successor of a divine race of princes, but as the immortal God himself, the object at once of civil obedience and religious adoration. This instance is singular, and may be accounted the farthest point to which the abuse of human credulity has ever been carried. But in all these instances the purpose was the same,—to engage the reverence of mankind, by an application to their religious principles.

The reader will be careful to observe that, in this article, we denominate every opinion, whether true or false, a *prejudice*, which is not founded upon argument, in the mind of the person who entertains it.

II. They who obey from *reason*, that is to say, from conscience as instructed by reasonings and conclusions of their own, are determined by the consideration of the necessity of some government or other; the certain mischief of civil commotions; and the danger of resettling the government of their country better, or at all, if once subverted or disturbed.

III. They who obey from *self-interest*, are kept in order by want of leisure; by a succession of private cares, pleasures, and engagements; by contentment, or a sense of the ease, plenty, and safety, which they enjoy; or lastly, and principally, by fear, foreseeing that

they would bring themselves by resistance into a worse situation than their present, inasmuch as the strength of government, each discontented subject reflects, is greater than his own, and he knows not that others would join him.

This last consideration has often been called *opinion of power.*

This account of the principles by which mankind are retained in their obedience to civil government, may suggest the following cautions:

1. Let civil governors learn hence to respect their subjects; let them be admonished, that *the physical strength resides in the governed,* that this strength wants only to be felt and roused, to lay prostrate the most ancient and confirmed dominion; that civil authority is founded in opinion; that general opinion therefore ought always to be treated with deference, and managed with delicacy and circumspection.

2. *Opinion of right,* always following *the custom,* being for the most part founded in nothing else, and lending one principal support to government; every innovation in the constitution, or, in other words, in the custom of governing, diminishes the stability of government. Hence some absurdities are to be retained, and many small inconveniences endured in every country, rather than that the usage should be violated, or the course of public affairs diverted from their old and smooth channel. Even *names* are not indifferent. When the multitude are to be dealt with, there is a *charm* in sounds. It was upon this principle, that several statesmen of those times advised Cromwell to assume the title of king, together with the ancient style and insignia of royalty. The minds of many they contended, would be brought to acquiesce in the authority of a king, who suspected the office, and were offended with the administration, of a protector. Novelty reminded them of usurpation. The adversaries of this design opposed the measure, from the same persuasion of the efficacy of names and forms, jealous lest the veneration paid to these, should add an influence to the new settlement which might insnare the liberty of the commonwealth.

3. *Government may be too secure.* The greatest tyrants have been those, whose titles were the most unquestioned. Whenever therefore the opinion of right becomes too predominant and superstitious, it is abated by *breaking the custom.* Thus the Revolution broke the *custom of succession,* and thereby moderated, both in the prince and in the people, those lofty notions of hereditary right, which in the one were become a continual incentive to tyranny, and disposed the other to invite servitude, by undue compliances and dangerous concessions.

4. As ignorance of union, and want of communication, appear amongst the principal preservatives of civil authority, it behoves every state to keep its subjects in this want and ignorance, not only by vigilance in guarding against actual confederacies and combinations, but by a timely care to prevent great collections of men of any separate party of religion, or of like occupation or profession, or in any way connected by a participation of interest or passion, from being assembled in the same vicinity. A Protestant establishment in this country may have little to fear from its Popish subjects, scattered as they are

throughout the kingdom, and intermixed with the Protestant inhabitants, which yet might think them a formidable body, if they were gathered together into one county. The most frequent and desperate riots are those which break out amongst men of the same profession, as weavers, miners, sailors. This circumstance makes a mutiny of soldiers more to be dreaded than any other insurrection. Hence also one danger of an overgrown metropolis, and of those great cities and crowded districts, into which the inhabitants of trading countries are commonly collected. The worst effect of popular tumults consists in this, that they discover to the insurgents the secret of their own strength, teach them to depend upon it against a future occasion, and both produce and diffuse sentiments of confidence in one another, and assurances of mutual support. Leagues thus formed and strengthened, may overawe or overset the power of any state; and the danger is greater, in proportion as, from the propinquity of habitation and intercourse of employment, the passions and counsels of a party can be circulated with ease and rapidity. It is by these means, and in such situations, that the minds of men are so affected and prepared, that the most dreadful uproars often arise from the slightest provocations.—When the train is laid, a spark will produce the explosion.

CHAPTER III.

The Duty of Submission to Civil Government explained.

THE subject of this chapter is sufficiently distinguished from the subject of the last, as the motives which actually produce civil obedience, may be, and often are, very different from the reasons which make that obedience a duty.

In order to prove civil obedience to be a moral duty, and an obligation upon the conscience, it hath been usual with many political writers, (at the head of whom we find the venerable name of Locke), to state a compact between the citizen and the state, as the ground and cause of the relation between them; which compact, binding the parties for the same general reason that private contracts do, resolves the duty of submission to civil government into the universal obligation of fidelity in the performance of promises. This compact is twofold:

First, An *express* compact by the primitive founders of the state, who are supposed to have convened for the declared purpose of settling the terms of their political union, and a future constitution of government The whole body is supposed, in the first place, to have unanimously consented to be bound by the resolutions of the majority; that majority, in the next place, to have fixed certain fundamental regulations, and then to have constituted, either in one person, or in an assembly (the rule of succession, or appointment, being at the same time determined), a *standing legislature*, to whom under these pre-established restrictions, the government of the state was thenceforward committed, and whose laws the several members of

the convention were, by their first undertaking, thus personally engaged to obey.—This transaction is sometimes called the *social compact*, and these supposed original regulations compose what are meant by the *constitution*, the *fundamental laws of the constitution*; and form, on one side, the *inherent indefeasible prerogative of the crown*, and, on the other, the inalienable, imprescriptible *birthright* of the subject.

Secondly, A *tacit* or *implied* compact, by all succeeding members of the state, who, by accepting its protection, consent to be bound by its laws; in like manner as, whoever *voluntarily enters* into a private society is understood, without any other or more explicit stipulation, to promise a conformity with the rules and obedience to the government of that society, as the known conditions upon which he is admitted to a participation of its privileges.

This account of the subject, although specious, and patronised by names the most respectable, appears to labour under the following objections; that it is founded upon a supposition false in fact, and leading to dangerous conclusions.

No social compact, similar to what is here described, was ever made or entered into in reality; no such original convention of the people was ever actually holden, or in any country could be holden, antecedent to the existence of civil government in that country. It is to suppose it possible to call savages out of caves and deserts, to deliberate and vote upon topics, which the experience, and studies, and refinements, of civil life, alone suggest. Therefore no government in the universe began from this original. Some imitation of a social compact may have taken place at a *revolution*. The present age has been witness to a transaction, which bears the nearest resemblance to this political idea, of any of which history has preserved the account or memory: I refer to the establishment of the United States of North America. We saw the *people* assembled to elect deputies, for the avowed purpose of framing the constitution of a new empire. We saw this deputation of the people deliberating and resolving upon a form of government, erecting a permanent legislature, distributing the functions of sovereignty, establishing and promulgating a code of fundamental ordinances which were to be considered by succeeding generations, not merely as laws and acts of the state, but as the very terms and conditions of the confederation; as binding not only upon the subjects and magistrates of the state, but as limitations of power, which were to control and regulate the future legislature. Yet even here much was presupposed. In settling the constitution, many important parts were presumed to be already settled. The qualifications of the constituents who were admitted to vote in the election of members of congress, as well as the mode of electing the representatives, were taken from the old forms of government. That was wanting, from which every social union should set off, and which alone makes the resolution of the society the act of the individual,—the unconstrained consent of all to be bound by the decision of the majority; and yet, without this previous consent, the revolt, and the regulations which followed it were compulsory upon dissentients.

But the original compact, we are told, is not proposed as a *fact*, but as a fiction, which furnishes a commodious explication of the

mutual rights and duties of sovereigns and subjects. In answer to this representation of the matter, we observe, that the original compact, if it be not a fact, is nothing; can confer no actual authority upon laws or magistrates; nor afford any foundation to rights which are supposed to be real and existing. But the truth is, that in the books, and in the apprehension, of those who deduce our civil rights and obligations *à pactis*, the original convention is appealed to and treated of as a reality. Whenever the disciples of this system speak of the constitution; of the fundamental articles of the constitution; of laws being constitutional or unconstitutional: of inherent, inalienable, inextinguishable rights, either in the prince, or in the people; or indeed of any laws, usages, or civil rights, as transcending the authority of the subsisting legislature, or possessing a force and sanction superior to what belong to the modern acts and edicts of the legislature; they secretly refer us to what passed at the original convention. They would teach us to believe, that certain rules and ordinances were established by the people, at the same time that they settled the charter of government, and the powers as well as the form of the future legislature; that this legislature consequently, deriving its commission and existence from the consent and act of the primitive assembly (of which indeed it is only the standing deputation), continues subject, in the exercise of its offices, and as to the extent of its power, to the rules, reservations, and limitations, which the same assembly then made and prescribed to it.

"As the first members of the state were bound by express stipulation to obey the government which they had erected; so the succeeding inhabitants of the same country are understood to promise allegiance to the constitution and government they find established, by accepting its protection, claiming its privileges, and acquiescing in its laws: more especially, by the purchase or inheritance of lands, to the possession of which, allegiance to the state is annexed, as the very service and condition of the tenure." Smoothly as this train of argument proceeds, little of it will endure examination. The native subjects of modern states are not conscious of any stipulation with the sovereigns, of ever exercising an election whether they will be bound or not by the acts of the legislature, of any alternative being proposed to their choice, of a promise either required or given: nor do they apprehend that the validity or authority of the laws depends at all upon *their* recognition or consent. In all stipulations, whether they be expressed or implied, private or public, formal or constructive, the parties stipulating must both possess the liberty of assent and refusal, and also be conscious of this liberty; which cannot with truth be affirmed of the subjects of civil government, as government is now, or ever was, actually administered. This is a defect, which no arguments can excuse or supply: all presumptions of consent, without this consciousness, or in opposition to it, are vain and erroneous. Still less is it possible to reconcile with any idea of stipulation the practice, in which all European nations agree, of founding allegiance upon the circumstance of nativity, that is, of claiming and treating as subjects all those who are born within the confines of their dominions, although removed to another country in their youth or infancy. In this instance certainly, the state does not presume a compact. Also, *if the* subject be bound only by his own consent, and if the voluntary

abiding in the country, be the proof and intimation of that consent, by what arguments should we defend the right, which sovereigns universally assume, of prohibiting, when they please, the departure of their subjects out of the realm?

Again, when it is contended that the taking and holding possession of land amounts to an acknowledgment of the sovereign, and a virtual promise of allegiance to his laws, it is necessary to the validity of the argument to prove that the inhabitants who first composed and constituted the state, collectively possessed a right to the soil of the country;—a right to parcel it out to whom they please, and to annex to the donation what conditions they thought fit. How came they by this right? An agreement amongst themselves would not confer it; that could only adjust what already belonged to them. A society of men vote themselves to be the owners of a region of the world:—does that vote, unaccompanied especially with any culture, enclosure, or proper act of occupation, make it theirs? does it entitle them to exclude others from it, or to dictate the conditions upon which it shall be enjoyed? Yet this original collective right and ownership is the foundation for all the reasoning by which the duty of allegiance is inferred from the possession of land.

The theory of government which affirms the existence and the obligation of a social compact, would, after all, merit little discussion, and, however groundless and unnecessary, should receive no opposition from us, did it not appear to lead to conclusions unfavourable to the improvement and to the peace of human society.

1st. Upon the supposition that government was first erected by, and that it derives all its just authority from, resolutions entered into by a convention of the people, it is capable of being presumed, that many points were settled by that convention, anterior to the establishment of the subsisting legislature, and which the legislature, consequently, has no right to alter, or interfere with. These points are called the *fundamentals* of the constitution; and as it is impossible to determine how many, or what they are, the suggesting of any such serves extremely to embarrass the deliberations of the legislature, and affords a dangerous pretence for disputing the authority of the laws. It was this sort of reasoning (so far as reasoning of any kind was employed in the question) that produced in this nation the doubt, which so much agitated the minds of men in the reign of the second Charles, whether an act of parliament could of right alter or limit the succession of the crown

2dly. If it be by virtue of a compact that the subject owes obedience to civil government, it will follow that he ought to abide by the form of government which he finds established, be it ever so absurd or inconvenient. He is bound by his bargain. It is not permitted to any man to retreat from his engagement, merely because he finds the performance disadvantageous, or because he has an opportunity of entering into a better. This law of contracts is universal: and to call the relation between the sovereign and the subjects a contract, yet not to apply to it the rules, or allow of the effects, of a contract is an arbitrary use of names, and an unsteadiness in reasoning, which can teach nothing. Resistance to the *encroachments* of the supreme magistrate may be justified upon this principle; recourse to arms, for the

purpose o bringing about an amendment of the constitution, never can. No form of government contains a provision for its own dissolution: and few governors will consent to the extinction, or even to any abridgment, of their own power. It does not therefore appear, how despotic governments can ever, in consistency with the obligation of the subject, be changed or mitigated. Despotism is the constitution of many states: and whilst a despotic prince exacts from his subjects the most rigorous servitude, according to this account he is only holding them to their agreement. A people may vindicate, by force, the rights which the constitution has left them; but every attempt to narrow the prerogative of the crown, by *new* limitations, and in opposition to the will of the reigning prince, whatever opportunities may invite, or success follow it, must be condemned as an infraction of the compact between the sovereign and the subject.

3dly. Every violation of the compact on the part of the governor, releases the subject from his allegiance, and dissolves the government. I do not perceive how we can avoid this consequence, if we found the duty of allegiance upon compact, and confess any analogy between the social compact, and other contracts. In private contracts, the violation and nonperformance of the conditions, by one of the parties, vacates the obligation of the other. Now the terms and articles of the social compact being no where extant or expressed; the rights and offices of the administrator of an empire being so many and various; the imaginary and controverted line of his prerogative being so liable to be overstepped in one part or other of it; the position, that every such transgression amounts to a forfeiture of the government, and consequently authorises the people to withdraw their obedience and provide for themselves by a new settlement would endanger the stability of every political fabric in the world, and has in fact always supplied the disaffected with a topic of seditious declamation. If occasions have arisen in which this plea has been resorted to with justice and success, they have been occasions in which a revolution was defensible on other and plainer principles. The plea itself is at all times captious and unsafe.

Wherefore, rejecting the intervention of a compact as unfounded in its principle, and dangerous in the application, we assign for the only ground of the subject's obligation, THE WILL OF GOD AS COLLECTED FROM EXPEDIENCY.

The steps by which the argument proceeds, are few and direct.—"It is the will of God that the happiness of human life be promoted:" this is the first step, and the foundation not only of this, but of every moral conclusion. "Civil society conduces to that end:"—this is the second proposition. "Civil societies cannot be upholden, unless in each, the interest of the whole society be binding upon every part and member of it:"—this is the third step, and conducts us to the conclusion, namely, "that so long as the interest of the whole society requires it, that is, so long as the established government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconveniency, it is the will of God (which *will* universally determines our duty) that the established government be obeyed,"—and no longer.

This principle being admitted, the justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger

and grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other.

But who shall judge this? We answer, "Every man for himself." In contentions between the sovereign and the subject, the parties acknowledge no common arbitrator; and it would be absurd to refer the decision to *those* whose conduct has provoked the question, and whose own interest, authority, and fate, are immediately concerned in it. The danger of error and abuse is no objection to the rule of expediency, because every other rule is liable to the same or greater; and every rule that can be propounded upon the subject (like all rules indeed which appeal to, or bind, the conscience) must in the application depend upon private judgment. It may be observed, however, that it ought equally to be accounted the exercise of a man's own private judgment, whether he be determined by reasonings and conclusions of his own, or submit to be directed by the advice of others, provided he be free to choose his guide.

We proceed to point out some easy but important inferences, which result from the substitution of *public expediency* into the place of all implied compacts, promises, or conventions whatsoever.

I. It may be as much a duty, at one time, to resist government, as it is, at another, to obey it; to wit, whenever more advantage will, in our opinion, accrue to the community from resistance, than mischief.

II. The lawfulness of resistance, or the lawfulness of a revolt, does not depend alone upon the grievance which is sustained or feared, but also upon the probable expense and event of the contest. They who concerted the Revolution in England, were justifiable in their counsels, because, from the apparent disposition of the nation, and the strength and character of the parties engaged, the measure was likely to be brought about with little mischief or bloodshed; whereas it might have been a question with many friends of their country, whether the injuries then endured and threatened would have authorized the renewal of a doubtful civil war.

III. Irregularity in the first foundation of a state, or subsequent violence, fraud, or injustice, in getting possession of the supreme power, are not sufficient reasons for resistance, after the government is once peaceably settled. No subject of the British empire conceives himself engaged to vindicate the justice of the Norman claim or conquest, or apprehends that his duty in any manner depends upon that controversy. So likewise, if the house of Lancaster, or even the posterity of Cromwell, had been at this day seated upon the throne of England, we should have been as little concerned to inquire how the founder of the family came there. No civil contests are so futile, although none have been so furious and sanguinary, as those which are excited by a disputed succession.

IV. Not every invasion of the subject's rights, or liberty, or of the constitution; not every breach of promise, or of oath; not every stretch of prerogative, abuse of power, or neglect of duty, by the chief magistrate, or by the whole or any branch of the legislative body justifies resistance, unless these crimes draw after them public consequences of sufficient magnitude to outweigh the evils of civil disturbance. Nevertheless, every violation of the constitution ought

to be watched with jealousy, and resented as *such*, beyond what the quantity of estimable damage would require or warrant; because a known and settled usage of governing affords the only security against the enormities of uncontrolled dominion, and because this security is weakened by every encroachment which is made without opposition, or opposed without effect.

V. No usage, law, or authority whatever, is so binding that it need or ought to be continued, when it may be changed with advantage to the community. The family of the prince, the order of succession, the prerogative of the crown, the form and parts of the legislature, together with the respective powers, office, duration, and mutual dependency, of the several parts, are all only so many *laws*, mutable like other laws, whenever expediency requires, either by the ordinary act of the legislature, or if the occasion deserve it, by the interposition of the people. These points are wont to be approached with a kind of awe; they are represented to the mind as principles of the constitution settled by our ancestors, and, being settled, to be no more committed to innovation or debate; as foundations never to be stirred, as the terms and conditions of the social compact, to which every citizen of the state has engaged his fidelity, by virtue of a promise which he cannot now recall. Such reasons have no place in our system: to us, if there be any good reason for treating these with more deference and respect than other laws, it is either the advantage of the present constitution of government (which reason must be of different force in different countries), or because in all countries it is of importance that the form and usage of governing be acknowledged and understood, as well by the governors as by the governed, and because the seldomer it is changed, the more perfectly it will be known by both sides.

VI. As all civil obligation is resolved into expediency, what, it may be asked, is the difference between the obligation of an Englishman and a Frenchman? or why, since the obligation of both appears to be founded in the same reason, is a Frenchman bound in conscience to bear any thing from his king, which an Englishman would not be bound to bear? Their conditions may differ, but their *rights*, according to this account, should seem to be equal; and yet we are accustomed to speak of the *rights* as well as of the happiness of a free people, compared with what belong to the subjects of absolute monarchies: how, you will say, can this comparison be explained, unless we refer to a difference in the compacts by which they are respectively bound?—This is a fair question, and the answer to it will afford a farther illustration of our principles. We admit then that there are many things which a Frenchman is bound in conscience, as well as by coercion, to endure at the hands of his prince, to which an Englishman would not be obliged to submit: but we assert that it is for these two reasons alone: *first*, because the same act of the prince is not the same grievance, where it is agreeable to the constitution, as where it infringes it; *secondly*, because redress in the two cases, is not equally attainable. Resistance cannot be attempted with equal hopes of success, or with the same prospect of receiving support from others, where the people are reconciled to their sufferings, as where they are alarmed by innovation. In this way, and no otherwise, the

subjects of different states possess different civil rights; the duty of obedience is defined by different boundaries; and the point of justifiable resistance placed at different parts of the *scale* of suffering; all which is sufficiently intelligible without a social compact.

VII. "The interest of the whole society is binding upon every part of it." No rule, short of this, will provide for the stability of civil government, or for the peace and safety of social life. Wherefore, as the individual members of the state are not permitted to pursue their private emolument to the prejudice of the community, so is it equally a consequence of this rule, that no particular colony, province, town, or district, can justly concert measures for their separate interest, which shall appear at the same time to diminish the *sum* of public prosperity. I do not mean, that it is necessary to the justice of a measure, that it profit each and every part of the community (for as the happiness of the whole may be increased, whilst that of some parts is diminished, it is possible that the conduct of one part of an empire may be detrimental to some other part, and yet just, provided one part gain more in happiness than the other part loses, so that the common weal be augmented by the change); but what I affirm is, that those counsels can never be reconciled with the obligations resulting from civil union, which cause the *whole* happiness of the society to be impaired for the conveniency of a *part*. This conclusion is applicable to the question of right between Great Britain and her revolted colonies. Had I been an American, I should not have thought it enough to have had it even demonstrated, that a separation from the parent state would produce effects beneficial to America; my relation to that state imposed upon me a farther inquiry, namely, whether the whole happiness of the empire was likely to be promoted by such a measure: not indeed the happiness of every part; that was not necessary, nor to be expected;—but whether what Great Britain would lose by the separation, was likely to be compensated to the joint stock of happiness, by the advantages which America would receive from it. The contested claims of sovereign states and their remote dependencies may be submitted to the adjudication of this rule with mutual safety. A public advantage is measured by the advantage which each individual receives, and by the number of those who receive it. A public evil is compounded of the same proportions. Whilst, therefore a colony is small, or a province thinly inhabited, if a competition of interests arise between the original country and their acquired dominions, the former ought to be preferred; because it is fit that, if one must necessarily be sacrificed, the less give place to the greater: but when, by an increase of population, the interest of the provinces begins to bear a considerable proportion to the *entire* interest of the community it is possible that they may suffer so much by their subjection, that not only theirs, but the whole happiness of the empire, may be obstructed by their union. The rule and principle of the calculation being still the same, the *result* is different: and this difference begets a new situation, which entitles the subordinate parts of the state to more equal terms of confederation, and, if these be refused, to independency.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Duty of Civil Obedience, as stated in the Christian Scriptures.

WE affirm that, as to the *extent* of our civil rights and obligations, *Christianity*, hath left us where she found us; that she hath neither altered nor ascertained it; that the New Testament contains not one passage, which, fairly interpreted, affords either argument or objection applicable to any conclusions upon the subject that are deduced from the law and religion of nature.

The only passages which have been seriously alleged in the controversy, or which it is necessary for us to state and examine, are the two following: the one extracted from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the other from the First General Epistle of St. Peter;—

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil, wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour."—*Romans*, xiii. 1—7.

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God."—1 *Peter*, ii. 13—18.

To comprehend the proper import of these instructions, let the reader reflect, that upon the subject of civil obedience there are two questions; the first, whether to obey government be a moral duty and obligation upon the conscience at all? the second, how far, and to what cases, that obedience ought to extend; that these two questions are so distinguishable in the imagination, that it is possible to treat of the one, without any thought of the other; and lastly, that if expressions which relate to one of these questions be transferred and applied to the other, it is with great danger of giving them a signification very

different from the author's meaning. This distinction is not only possible, but natural. If I met with a person who appeared to entertain doubts, whether civil obedience were a moral duty which ought to be voluntarily discharged, or whether it were not a mere submission to force, like that which we yield to a robber who holds a pistol to our breast, I should represent to him the use and offices of civil government, the end and the necessity of civil subjection; or if I preferred a different theory, I should explain to him the social compact, urge him with the obligation and the equity of his implied promise and tacit consent to be governed by the laws of the state from which he received protection; or I should argue, perhaps, that nature herself dictated the law of subordination, when she planted within us an inclination to associate with our species, and framed us with capacities so various and unequal. From whatever principle I set out, I should labour to infer from it this conclusion, "That obedience to the state is to be numbered amongst the relative duties of human life, for the transgression of which we shall be accountable at the Tribunal of Divine Justice, whether the magistrate be able to punish us for it or not;" and being arrived at this conclusion, I should stop, having delivered the conclusion itself, and throughout the whole argument expressed the obedience, which I inculcated, in the most general and unqualified terms; all reservations and restrictions being superfluous, and foreign to the doubts I was employed to remove.

If, in a short time afterward, I should be accosted by the same person, with complaints of public grievances, of exorbitant taxes, of acts of cruelty and oppression, of tyrannical encroachments upon the ancient or stipulated rights of the people, and should be consulted whether it were lawful to revolt or justifiable to join in an attempt to shake off the yoke by open resistance; I should certainly consider myself as having a case and question before me very different from the former. I should now define and discriminate. I should reply, that if public expediency be the foundation, it is also the measure, of civil obedience; that the obligation of subjects and sovereigns is reciprocal; that the duty of allegiance, whether it be founded in utility or compact, is neither unlimited nor unconditional; that peace may be purchased too dearly; that patience becomes culpable pusillanimity, when it serves only to encourage our rulers to increase the weight of our burden, or to bind it the faster: that the submission which surrenders the liberty of a nation, and entails slavery upon future generations, is enjoined by no law of rational morality; finally, I should instruct the inquirer to compare the peril and expense of his enterprise with the effects it was expected to produce, and to make choice of the alternative by which, not his own present relief or profit, but the whole and permanent interest of the state, was likely to be best promoted. If any one who had been present at both these conversations, should upbraid me with change or inconsistency of opinion, should retort upon me the passive doctrine which I before taught, the large and absolute terms in which I then delivered lessons of obedience and submission, I should account myself unfairly dealt with. I should reply, that the only difference which the language of the two conversations presented was, that I added now many exceptions and limitations, which were omitted or unthought of then: that this differ-

ence arose naturally from the two occasions, such exceptions being as necessary to the subject of our present conference, as they would have been superfluous and unseasonable in the former.

Now the difference in these two conversations is precisely the distinction to be taken in interpreting those passages of Scripture, concerning which we are debating. They inculcate the *duty*, they do not describe the *extent* of it. They enforce the obligation by the proper sanctions of Christianity, without intending either to enlarge or contract, without considering, indeed, the limits by which it is bounden. This is also the method in which the same apostles enjoin the duty of servants to their masters, of children to their parents, of wives to their husbands: "Servants, be subject to your masters."—"Children, obey your parents in all things,"—"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." The same concise and absolute form of expression occurs in all these precepts; the same silence as to any exceptions or distinctions: yet no one doubts that the commands of masters, parents, and husbands, are often so immoderate, unjust, and inconsistent with other obligations, that they both may and ought to be resisted. In letters or dissertations written professedly upon separate articles of morality, we might with more reason have looked for a precise delineation of our duty, and some degree of modern accuracy, in the rules which were laid down for our direction: but in those short collections of practical maxims which compose the conclusion, or some small portion, of a doctrinal or perhaps controversial epistle, we cannot be surprised to find the author more solicitous to impress the duty, than curious to enumerate exceptions.

The consideration of this distinction is alone sufficient to vindicate these passages of Scripture from any explanation which may be put upon them, in favour of an unlimited passive obedience. But if we be permitted to assume a supposition which many commentators proceed upon as a certainty, that the first Christians privately cherished an opinion, that their conversion to Christianity entitled them to new immunities, to an exemption, as of *right* (however they might give way to necessity), from the authority of the Roman sovereign; we are furnished with a still more apt and satisfactory interpretation of the apostles' words. The two passages apply with great propriety to the refutation of this error: they teach the Christian convert to obey the magistrate "for the Lord's sake;" "not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake;"—"that there is no power but of God;"—"that the powers that be," even the present rulers of the Roman empire, though heathens and usurpers, seeing they are in possession of the actual and necessary authority of civil government, "are ordained of God;" and, consequently, entitled to receive obedience from those who profess themselves the peculiar servants of God, in a greater (certainly not in a less) degree than from any others. They briefly describe the office of "civil governors, the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well;" from which description of the use of government, they justly infer the duty of subjection; which duty, being as extensive as the reason upon which it is founded, belongs to Christians, no less than to the heathen members of the community. If it be admitted, that the two apostles wrote with a view *to this* particular question, it will be confessed, that their words can-

not be transferred to a question totally different from this, with any certainty of carrying along with us their authority and intention. There exists no resemblance between the case of a primitive convert, who disputed the jurisdiction of the Roman government over a disciple of Christianity, and *his* who, acknowledging the general authority of the state over all its subjects, doubts whether that authority be not, in some important branch of it, so ill constituted or abused, as to warrant the endeavours of the people to bring about a reformation by force. Nor can we judge what reply the apostles would have made to this *second* question if it had been proposed to them, from any thing they have delivered upon the *first;* any more than, in the two consultations above described, it could be known beforehand what I would say in the latter, from the answer which I gave to the former.

The only defect in this account is, that neither the Scriptures, no any subsequent history of the early ages of the church, furnish any direct attestation of the existence of such disaffected sentiments amongst the primitive converts. They supply indeed some circumstances which render probable the opinion, that extravagant notions of the political rights of the Christian state were at that time entertained by many proselytes to the religion. From the question proposed to Christ, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar?" it may be presumed that doubts had been started in the Jewish schools concerning the obligation, or even the lawfulness, of submission to the Roman yoke. The accounts delivered by Josephus, of various insurrections of the Jews of that and the following age, excited by this principle, or upon this pretence, confirm the presumption. Now, as the Christians were at first chiefly taken from the Jews, confounded with them by the rest of the world, and, from the affinity of the two religions, apt to intermix the doctrines of both, it is not to be wondered at, that a tenet so flattering to the self-importance of those who embraced it, should have been communicated to the new institution. Again the teachers of Christianity, amongst the privileges which their religion conferred upon its professors, were wont to extol the "*liberty* into which they were called,"—"in which Christ had made them free." This liberty, which was intended of a deliverance from the various servitude in which they had heretofore lived, to the domination of sinful passions, to the superstition of the Gentile idolatry, or the encumbered ritual of the Jewish dispensation, might by some be interpreted to signify an emancipation from all restraint which was imposed by an authority merely human. At least they might be represented by their enemies as maintaining notions of this dangerous tendency. To some error or calumny of this kind, the words of St. Peter seem to allude:—"For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness (*i. e.* sedition) but as the servants of God." After all, if any one think this conjecture too feebly supported by testimony, to be relied upon in the interpretation of Scripture, he will then revert to the considerations alleged in the preceding part of this chapter.

After so copious an account of what we apprehend to be the gene-

ral design and doctrine of these much agitated passages, little need be added in explanation of particular clauses. St. Paul has said "Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." This phrase, "the ordinance of God," is by many so interpreted as to authorize the most exalted and superstitious ideas of the regal character. But surely such interpreters have sacrificed truth to adulation. For, in the first place, the expression, as used by St. Paul is just as applicable to one kind of government, and to one kind of succession, as to another;---to the elective magistrates of a pure republic as to an absolute hereditary monarch. In the next place, it is not affirmed of the supreme magistrate exclusively, that *he* is the ordinance of God; the title, whatever it imports, belongs to every inferior officer of the state as much as to the highest. The divine right of *kings* is, like the divine right of other magistrates,---the law of the land, or even actual and quiet possession of their office;---a right ratified, we humbly presume, by the Divine approbation, so long as obedience to their authority, appears to be necessary or conducive to the common welfare. Princes are ordained of God by virtue only of that general decree by which he assents, and adds the sanction of his will, to every law of society which promotes his own purpose, the communication of human happiness; according to which idea of their origin and constitution (and without any repugnancy to the words of St Paul), they are by St. Peter denominated the *ordinance* of *man*.

CHAPTER V.

Of Civil Liberty.

CIVIL LIBERTY *is the not being restrained by any law, but what conduces in a greater degree to the public welfare.*

To do what we will, is natural liberty: to do what we will, consistently with the interest of the community to which we belong, is civil liberty: that is to say, the only liberty to be desired in a state of civil society.

I should wish, no doubt, to be allowed to act in every instance as I pleased, but I reflect that the rest also of mankind would then do the same; in which state of universal independence and self-direction, I should meet with so many checks and obstacles to my own will, from the interference and opposition of other men's, that not only my happiness, but my liberty, would be less, than whilst the whole community were subject to the dominion of equal laws.

The boasted liberty of a state of nature exists only in a state of solitude. In every kind and degree of union and intercourse with his species, it is possible that the liberty of the individual may be augmented by the very laws which restrain it: because he may gain more from the limitation of other men's freedom than he suffers by the diminution of his own. Natural liberty is the right of common upon a waste: civil liberty is the safe, exclusive, unmolested enjoyment of a *cultivated* enclosure.

The definition of civil liberty above laid down, imports that the laws of a free people impose no restraints upon the private will of the subject, which do not conduce in *a greater degree* to the public happiness; by which it is intimated, 1st, That restraint itself is an evil; 2ndly, That this evil ought to be overbalanced by some public advantage; 3dly, That the proof of this advantage lies upon the legislature; 4thly, That a law being found to produce no sensible good effects, is a sufficient reason for repealing it, as adverse and injurious to the rights of a free citizen, without demanding specific evidence of its bad effects. This maxim might be remembered with advantage in a revision of many laws of this country; especially of the game-laws; of the poor-laws, so far as they lay restrictions upon the poor themselves; of the laws againsts Papists and dissenters: and amongst people enamoured to excess and jealous of their liberty, it seems a matter of surprise that this principle has been so imperfectly attended to.

The degree of actual liberty always bearing, according to this account of it, a reversed proportion to the number and severity of the *restrictions* which are either useless, or the utility of which does not outweigh the evil of the restraint, it follows, that every nation possesses some, no nation perfect, liberty: that this liberty may be enjoyed under every form of government; that it may be impaired, or increased, but that it is neither gained, nor lost, nor recovered, by any single regulation, change, or event whatever: that consequently, those popular phrases which speak of a free people; of a nation of slaves; which call one revolution the era of liberty, or another the loss of it; with many expressions of a like absolute form; are intelligible only in a comparative sense.

Hence also we are enabled to apprehend the distinction between *personal* and *civil* liberty. A citizen of the freest republic in the world may be imprisoned for his crimes; and though his personal freedom be restrained by bolts and fetters, so long as his confinement is the effect of a beneficial public law, his civil liberty is not invaded. If this instance appears dubious, the following will be plainer. A passenger from the Levant, who, upon his return to England, should be conveyed to a lazaretto by an order of quarantine, with whatever impatience he might desire his enlargement, and though he saw a guard placed at the door to oppose his escape, or even ready to destroy his life if he attempted it, would hardly accuse government of encroaching upon his civil freedom; nay, might, perhaps, be all the while congratulating himself that he had at length set his foot again in a land of liberty. The manifest expediency of the measure not only justifies it, but reconciles the most odious confinement with the perfect possession, and the loftiest notions, of civil liberty. And if this be true of the coercion of a prison, that it is compatible with a state of *civil* freedom, it cannot with reason be disputed of those more moderate constraints which the ordinary operation of government imposes upon the will of the individual. It is not the rigour, but the inexpediency of laws, and acts of authority, which makes them tyrannical.

There is another idea of civil liberty, which, though neither so simple nor so accurate as the former, agrees better with the signification, which the usage of common discourse, as well as the example of many respectable writers upon the subject, has affixed to the term. This idea

places liberty in security; making it to consist, not merely in an actual exemption from the constraint of useless and noxious laws and acts of dominion, but in being free from the *danger* of having such hereafter imposed or exercised. Thus, speaking of the political state of modern Europe, we are accustomed to say of Sweden, that she hath lost her liberty by the revolution which lately took place in that country; and yet we are assured that the people continued to be governed by the same laws as before, or by others which are wiser, milder, and more equitable. What then have they lost? They have lost the power and functions of their diet; the constitution of their states and orders, whose deliberations and concurrence were required in the formation and establishment of every public law; and thereby have parted with the security which they possessed against any attempts of the crown to harass its subjects, by oppressive and useless exertions of prerogative. The loss of this security we denominate the loss of liberty. They have changed, not their laws, but their legislature; not their enjoyment, but their safety; not their present burdens, but their prospects of future grievances: and this we pronounce a change from the condition of freemen to that of slaves. In like manner, in our own country, the act of parliament, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, which gave to the king's proclamation the force of law, has properly been called a complete and formal surrender of the liberty of the nation; and would have been so, although no proclamation were issued in pursuance of these new powers, or none but was recommended by the highest wisdom and utility. The security was gone. Were it probable that the welfare and accommodation of the people would be as studiously, and as providently, consulted in the edicts of a despotic prince, as by the resolutions of a popular assembly, then would an absolute form of government be no less free than the purest democracy. The different degree of care and knowledge of the public interest which may reasonably be expected from the different form and composition of the legislature, constitutes the distinction, in respect of liberty, as well between these two extremes, as between all the intermediate modifications of civil government.

The definitions which have been framed of civil liberty, and which have become the subject of much unnecessary altercation, are most of them adapted to this idea. Thus one political writer makes the very essence of the subject's liberty to consist in his being governed by no laws but those to which he hath actually consented; another is satisfied with an indirect and virtual consent; another, again, places civil liberty in the separation of the legislative and executive offices of government; another, in the being governed by *law*, that is, by known, preconstituted inflexible rules of action and adjudication; a fifth, in the exclusive right of the people to tax themselves by their own representatives; a sixth, in the freedom and purity of elections of representatives; a seventh, in the control which the democratic part of the constitution possesses over the military establishment. Concerning which and some other similar accounts of civil liberty, it may be observed, that they all labour under one inaccuracy, *viz.* that they describe not so much liberty itself, as the safeguards and preservatives of liberty; for example, a man's being governed by no laws but those to which he has given his consent, were it practicable, is no otherwise necessary to

the enjoyment of civil liberty, than as it affords a probable security against the dictation of laws imposing superfluous restrictions upon his private will. This remark is applicable to the rest. The diversity of these definitions will not surprise us, when we consider that there is no contrariety or opposition amongst them whatever; for by how many different provisions and precautions civil liberty is fenced and protected, so many different accounts of liberty itself, all sufficiently consistent with truth and with each other, may, according to this mode of explaining the term, be framed and adopted.

Truth cannot be offended by a definition; but propriety may. In which view, those definitions of liberty ought to be rejected, which, by making that essential to civil freedom which is unattainable in experience, inflame expectations that can never be gratified, and disturb the public content with complaints, which no wisdom or benevolence of government can remove.

It will not be thought extraordinary, that an idea, which occurs so much oftener as the subject of panegyric and careless declamation, than of just reasoning or correct knowledge should be attended with uncertainty and confusion; or that it should be found impossible to contrive a definition, which may include the numerous, unsettled, and ever-varying significations, which the term is made to stand for, and at the same time accord with the condition and experience of social life.

Of the two ideas that have been stated of civil liberty, whichever we assume, and whatever reasoning we found upon them, concerning its extent, nature, value, and preservation, this is the conclusion;—that *that* people, government, and constitution, is the *freest*, which makes the best provision for the enacting of expedient and salutary laws.

CHAPTER VI.

Of different forms of Government.

AS a series of appeals must be finite, there necessarily exists in every government a power from which the constitution has provided no appeal; and which power, for that reason, may be termed absolute, omnipotent, uncontrollable, arbitrary, despotic; and is alike so in all countries.

The person or assembly, in whom this power resides, is called the *sovereign*, or the supreme power of the state

Since to the same power universally appertains the office of establishing public laws, it is called also the *legislature* of the state.

A government receives its denomination from the form of the legislature; which form is likewise what we commonly mean by the *constitution* of a country.

Political writers enumerate three principal forms of government, which, however, are to be regarded rather as the simple forms, by some combination and intermixture of which all actual governments are composed, than as any where existing in a pure and elementary state. These forms are,

I. Despotism or absolute MONARCHY, where the legislature is in a single person.

II. An ARISTOCRACY, where the legislature is in a select assembly, the members of which either fill up by election the vacancies in their own body, or succeed to their places in it by inheritance, property, tenure of certain lands, or in respect of some personal right or qualification.

III. A REPUBLIC, or democracy, where the people at large, either collectively or by representation, constitute the legislature.

The separate advantages of MONARCHY are, unity of counsel, activity, decision, secrecy, dispatch; the military strength and energy which result from these qualities of government; the exclusion of popular and aristocratical contentions: the preventing, by a known rule of succession, of all competition for the supreme power, and thereby repressing the hopes, intrigues, and dangerous ambition, of aspiring citizens.

The mischiefs, or rather the dangers of MONARCHY are, tyranny, expence, exaction, military domination; unnecessary wars, waged to gratify the passions of an individual; risk of the character of the reigning prince; ignorance in the governors, of the interests and accommodation of the people, and a consequent deficiency of salutary regulations; want of constancy and uniformity in the rules of government, and, proceeding from thence, insecurity of person and property.

The separate advantage of an ARISTOCRACY consists in the wisdom which may be expected from experience and education:—a permanent council naturally possesses experience; and the members who succeed to their places in it by inheritance, will, probably, be trained and educated with a view to the stations which they are destined by their birth to occupy.

The mischiefs of an ARISTORCACY are, dissentions in the ruling orders of the state, which from the want of a common superior, are liable to proceed to the most desperate extremities; oppression of the lower orders by the privileges of the higher, and by laws partial to the separate interest of the law-makers.

The advantages of a REPUBLIC are, liberty, or exemption from needless restrictions; equal laws; regulations adapted to the wants and circumstances of the people; public spirit, frugality, averseness to war; the opportunities which democratic assemblies afford to men of every description, of producing their abilities and counsels to public observation, and the exciting thereby, and calling forth to the service of the commonwealth, the faculties of its best citizens.

The evils of a REPUBLIC are, dissention, tumults, faction: the attempts of powerful citizens to possess themselves of the empire; the confusion, rage, and clamour, which are the inevitable consequences of assembling multitudes, and of propounding questions of state to the discussions of the people; the delay and disclosures of public counsels and designs; and the imbecility of measures retarded by the necessity of obtaining the consent of numbers; lastly, the oppression of the provinces which are not admitted to a participation in the legislative power.

A *mixed* government is composed by the combination of two or *more* of the simple forms of government above described:—and in

whatever proportion each form enters into the constitution of a government, in the same proportion may both the advantages and evils, which we have attributed to that form, be expected; that is, those are the uses to be maintained and cultivated in each part of the constitution, and these are the dangers to be provided against in each. Thus, if secrecy and dispatch be truly enumerated amongst the separate excellences of regal government, then a mixed government, which retains monarchy in one part of its constitution, should be careful that the other estates of the empire do not, by an officious and inquisitive interference with the executive functions, which are, or ought to be, reserved to the administration of the prince, interpose delays, or divulge what it is expedient to conceal. On the other hand, if profusion, exaction, military domination, and needless wars, be justly accounted natural properties of monarchy, in its simple unqualified form; then are these the objects to which, in a mixed government, the aristocratic and popular parts of the constitution ought to direct their vigilance; the dangers against which they should raise and fortify their barriers; these are departments of sovereignty, over which a power of inspection and control ought to be deposited with the people.

The same observation may be repeated of all the other advantages and inconveniences which have been ascribed to the several simple forms of government; and affords a rule whereby to direct the construction, improvements, and administration, of mixed governments,—subjected however to this remark, that a quality sometimes results from the conjunction of two simple forms of government, which belongs not to the separate existence of either: thus corruption, which has no place in an absolute monarchy, and little in a pure republic, is sure to gain admission into a constitution, which divides the supreme power between an executive magistrate and a popular council.

An *hereditary* MONARCHY is universally to be preferred to an *elective* monarchy. The confession of every writer on the subject of civil government, the experience of ages, the example of Poland, and of the papal dominions, seem to place this amongst the few indubitable maxims which the science of politics admits of. A crown is too splendid a prize to be conferred upon merit: the passions or interests of the electors exclude all consideration of the qualities of the competitors. The same observation holds concerning the appointment to any office which is attended with a great share of power or emolument. Nothing is gained by a popular choice, worth the dissensions, tumults, and interruption, of regular industry, with which it is inseparably attended. Add to this, that a king who owes his elevation to the event of a contest, or to any other cause than a fixed rule of succession, will be apt to regard one part of his subjects as the associates of his fortune, and the other as conquered foes. Nor should it be forgotten, amongst the advantages of an *hereditary* monarchy, that, as plans of national improvement and reform are seldom brought to maturity by the exertions of a single reign, a nation cannot attain to the degree of happiness and prosperity to which it is capable of being carried, unless a uniformity of counsels, a consistency of public measures and designs be continued through a succession of ages. This benefit may be expected with greater probability where the supreme power descends in the same race, and where each prince succeeds, in some sort to the aim

pursuits, and disposition, of his ancestor, than if the crown, at every change, devolve upon a stranger, whose first care will commonly be to pull down what his predecessor had built up; and to substitute systems of administration, which must, in their turn, give way to the more favourite novelties of the next successor.

ARISTOCRACIES are of two kinds.—First, where the power of the nobility belongs to them in their collective capacity alone; that is, where, although the government reside in an assembly of the order, yet the members of that assembly separately and individually possess no authority or privilege beyond the rest of the community:—this describes the constitution of Venice. Secondly, where the nobles are severally invested with great personal power and immunities, and where the power of the senate is little more than the aggregated powers of the individuals who compose it:—this is the constitution of Poland. Of these two forms of government, the first is more tolerable than the last: for, although the members of a senate should many, or even all of them, be profligate enough to abuse the authority of their stations in the prosecution of private designs, yet, not being all under a temptation to the same injustice, not having all the same end to gain, it would still be difficult to obtain the consent of a majority to any specific act of oppression which the iniquity of an individual might prompt him to propose; or if the will were the same, the power is more confined; one tyrant, whether the tyranny reside in a single person, or a senate, cannot exercise oppression at so many places, at the same time, as it may be carried on by the dominion of a numerous nobility over their respective vassals and dependants. Of all species of domination, this is the most odious: the freedom and satisfaction of private life are more constrained and harassed by it than by the most vexatious laws, or even by the lawless will of an arbitrary monarch, from whose knowledge, and from whose injustice, the greatest part of his subjects are removed by their distance, or concealed by their obscurity.

Europe exhibits more than one modern example, where the people aggrieved by the exactions, or provoked by the enormities of their immediate superiors, have joined with the reigning prince in the overthrow of the aristocracy, deliberately exchanging their condition for the miseries of despotism. About the middle of the last century, the commons of Denmark, weary of the oppressions which they had long suffered from the nobles, and exasperated by some recent insults, presented themselves at the foot of the throne with a formal offer of their consent to establish unlimited dominion in the king. The revolution in Sweden, still more lately brought about with the acquiescence, not to say the assistance, of the people, owed its success to the same cause, namely, to the prospect of deliverance that it afforded from the tyranny which their nobles excercised under the old constitution. In England, the people beheld the depression of the barons, under the house of Tudor, with satisfaction, although they saw the crown acquiring thereby a power which no limitations that the constitution had then provided were likely to confine. The lesson to be drawn from such events is this: that a mixed government, which admits a patrician order into its constitution, ought to circumscribe the personal privileges of the nobility, especially claims of hereditary jurisdiction and local authority, with a *jealousy* equal to the solicitude with which it wishes its own preserva-

tion; for nothing so alienates the minds of the people from the government under which they live, by a perpetual sense of annoyance and inconveniency, or so prepares them for the practice of an enterprizing prince, or a factious demagogue, as the abuse which almost always accompanies the existence of separate immunities.

Amongst the inferior, but by no means inconsiderable, advantages of a DEMOCRATIC constitution, or of a constitution in which the people partake of the power of legislation, the following should not be neglected.

I. The direction which it gives to the education, studies, and pursuits, of the superior orders of the community. The share which this has in forming the public manners and national character, is very important. In countries in which the gentry are excluded from all concern in the government, scarcely any thing is left which leads to advancement, but the profession of arms. They who do not addict themselves to this profession (and miserable must that country be, which constantly employs the military service of a great proportion of any order of its subjects!) are commonly lost by the mere want of object and destination; that is, they either fall, without reserve, into the more sottish habits of animal gratification, or entirely devote themselves to the attainment of those futile arts and decorations which compose the business and recommendations of a court: on the other hand, where the whole, or any effective portion of civil power is possessed by a popular assembly, more serious pursuits will be encouraged; purer morals, and a more intellectual character, will engage the public esteem; those faculties which qualify men for deliberation and debate, and which are the fruit of sober habits, of early and long-continued application, will be roused and animated by the reward which, of all others, most readily awakens the ambition of the human mind—political dignity and importance.

II. Popular elections procure to the common people courtesy from their superiors. That contemptuous and overbearing insolence, with which the lower orders of the community are wont to be treated by the higher, is greatly mitigated where the people have something to give. The assiduity with which their favour is sought upon these occasions, serves to generate settled habits of condescension and respect; and as human life is more imbittered by affronts than injuries, whatever contributes to procure mildness and civility of manners towards those who are most liable to suffer from a contrary behaviour, corrects, with the pride, in a great measure, the evil of inequality, and deserves to be accounted among the most generous institutions of social life.

III. The satisfactions which the people in free governments derive from the knowledge and agitation of political subjects; such as the proceedings and debates of the senate; the conduct and characters of ministers; the revolutions, intrigues, and contentions, of parties: and, in general, from the discussion of public measures, questions, and occurrences. Subjects of this sort excite just enough of interest and emotion to afford a moderate engagement to the thoughts, without rising to any painful degree of anxiety, or ever leaving a fixed oppression upon the spirits;—and what is this, but the end and aim of all those amusements which compose so much of the business of life and

the value of riches? For my part (and I believe it to be the case with most men who are arrived at the middle age, and occupy the middle classes of life), had I all the money which I pay in taxes to government, at liberty to lay out upon amusement and diversion, I know not whether I could make choice of any in which I could find greater pleasure than what I receive from expecting, hearing and relating, public news; reading parliamentary debates and proceedings: canvassing the political arguments, projects, predictions, and intelligence, which are conveyed, by various channels, to every corner of the kingdom. These topics, exciting universal curiosity, and being such as almost every man is ready to form, and prepared to deliver his opinion about, greatly promote, and, I think, improve conversation. They render it more rational and more innocent; they supply a substitute for drinking, gaming, scandal, and obscenity. Now the secrecy, the jealousy, the solitude, and precipitation, of despotic governments, exclude all this. But the loss, you say, is trifling. I know that it is possible to render even the mention of it ridiculous, by representing it as the idle employment of the most insignificant part of the nation, the folly of village-statesmen and coffee-house politicians: but I allow nothing to be a trifle which ministers to the harmless gratification of multitudes; nor any order of men to be insignificant, whose number bears a respectable proportion to the sum of the whole community.

We have been accustomed to an opinion, that a REPUBLICAN form of government suits only with the affairs of a small state; which opinion is founded in the consideration, that unless the people, in every district of the empire, be admitted to a share in the national representation, the government is not, as to them, a republic; that elections, where the constituents are numerous, and dispersed through a wide extent of country, are conducted with difficulty, or rather, indeed, managed by the intrigues and combinations of a few, who are situated near the place of election, each voter considering his single suffrage as too minute a portion of the general interest to deserve his care or attendance, much less to be worth any opposition to influence and application; that whilst we contract the representation within a compass small enough to admit of orderly debate, the interest of the constituent becomes too small, of the representative too great. It is difficult also to maintain any connexion between them. He who represents two hundred thousand, is necessarily a stranger to the greatest part of those who elect him; and when his interest among them ceases to depend upon an acquaintance with their persons and character, or a care or knowledge of their affairs; when such a representative finds the treasures and honours of a great empire at the disposal of a few, and himself one of the few; there is little reason to hope that he will not prefer to his public duty those temptations of personal aggrandizement which his situation offers, and which the price of his vote will always purchase. All appeal to the people is precluded by the impossibility of collecting a sufficient proportion of their force and numbers. The factions and the unanimity of the senate are equally dangerous. Add to these considerations, that in a democratic constitution the mechanism is too complicated, and the motions too slow, for the operation of a great empire; whose defence and government require execution and despatch, in proportion to the magnitude, extent, aad variety, of its

concerns. There is weight, no doubt, in these reasons; but much of the objection seems to be done away by the contrivance of a *federal* republic, which, distributing the country into districts of a commodious extent, and leaving to each district its internal legislation, reserves to a convention of the states the adjustment of their relative claims; the levying, direction, and government, of the common force of the confederacy; the requisition of subsidies for the support of this force; the making of peace and war; the entering into treaties; the regulation of foreign commerce; the equalization of duties upon imports, so as to prevent the defrauding of the revenue of one province by smuggling articles of taxation from the borders of another; and likewise so as to guard against undue partialities in the encouragement of trade. To what limits such a republic might, without inconveniency, enlarge its dominions, by assuming neighbouring provinces into the confederation or how far it is capable of uniting the liberty of a small commonwealth with the safety of a powerful empire; or whether, amongst co-ordinate powers, dissensions and jealousies would not be likely to arise, which, for want of a common superior, might proceed to fatal extremities; are questions upon which the records of mankind do not authorize us to decide with tolerable certainty. The experiment is about to be tried in America upon a large scale.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the British Constitution.

BY the CONSTITUTION of a country, is meant so much of its laws as relates to the designation and form of the legislature; the rights, and functions of the several parts of the legislative body; the construction, office, and jurisdiction, of courts of justice. The constitution is one principal division, section, or title, of the code of public laws; distinguished from the rest only by the superior importance of the subject of which it treats. Therefore the terms *constitutional* and *unconstitutional*, mean legal and illegal. The distinction and the ideas which these terms denote, are founded in the same authority with the law of the land upon any other subject; and to be ascertained by the same inquiries. In England, the system of public jurisprudence is made up of acts of parliament, of decisions of courts of law, and of immemorial usages; consequently these are the principles of which the English constitution itself consists, the sources from which all our knowledge of its nature and limitations is to be deduced, and the authorities to which all appeal ought to be made, and by which every constitutional doubt and question can alone be decided. This plain and intelligible definition is the more necessary to be preserved in our thoughts, as some writers upon the subject absurdly confound what is constitutional with what is expedient; pronouncing forthwith a measure to be unconstitutional, which they adjudge in any respect to be detrimental or dangerous: whilst others, again, ascribe a kind of transcendant authority, or mysterious sanctity to the constitution, as if it were founded in some higher original than

that which give force and obligation to the ordinary laws and statutes of the realm, or were inviolable on any other account than its intrinsic utility. An act of parliament in England can never be unconstitutional, in the strict and proper acceptation of the term; in a lower sense it may, *viz.* when it militates with the spirit, contradicts the analogy, or defeats the provision, of other laws, made to regulate the form of government. Even that flagitious abuse of their trust, by which a parliament of Henry the Eighth conferred upon the king's proclamation the authority of law, was unconstitutional only in this latter sense.

Most of those who treat of the British constitution, consider it as a scheme of government formally planned and contrived by our ancestors, in some certain era of our national history, and as set up in pursuance of such regular plan and design. Something of this sort is secretly supposed, or referred to, in the expressions of those who speak of the "principles of the constitution," of bringing back the constitution to its "first principles," of restoring it to its "original purity," or "primitive model." Now this appears to me an erroneous conception of the subject. No such plan was ever formed, consequently no such first principles, original model, or standard exist: I mean, there never was a date or point of time in our history, when the government of England was to be set up anew, and when it was referred to any single person, or assembly, or committee, to frame a charter for the future government of the country; or when a constitution so prepared and digested, was by common consent received and established. In the time of the civil wars, or rather between the death of Charles the First and the restoration of his son, many such projects were published, but none were carried into execution. The Great Charter, and the Bill of Rights, were wise and strenuous efforts to obtain security against certain abuses of regal power, by which the subject had been formerly aggrieved: but these were, either of them, much too partial modifications of the constitution, to give it a new original. The constitution of England, like that of most countries of Europe, hath grown out of occasion and emergency; from the fluctuating policy of different ages; from the contentions, successes, interests, and opportunities, of different orders and parties of men in the community. It resembles one of those old mansions, which, instead of being built all at once, after a regular plan, and according to the rules of architecture at present established, has been reared in different ages of the art, has been altered from time to time, and has been continually receiving additions and repairs, suited to the taste, fortune, or conveniency, of its successive proprietors. In such a building, we look in vain for the elegance and proportion, for the just order and correspondence, of parts, which we expect in a modern edifice; and which external symmetry, after all, contributes much more perhaps to the amusement of the beholder, than the accommodation of the inhabitant.

In the British, and possibly in all other constitutions, there exists a wide difference between the actual state of the government and the theory. The one results from the other; but still they are different. When we contemplate the *theory* of the British government, we see the king invested with the most absolute personal impunity; with a

power of rejecting laws, which have been resolved upon by both houses of parliament; of conferring by his charter, upon any set of succession of men he pleases, the privilege of sending representatives into one house of parliament; as by his immediate appointment he can place whom he will in the other. What is this, a foreigner might ask, but a more circuitous despotism? Yet, when we turn our attention from the legal extent, to the actual exercise of royal authority in England, we see these formidable prerogatives dwindled into mere ceremonies; and, in their stead, a sure and commanding influence, of which the constitution, it seems, is totally ignorant, growing out of that enormous patronage which the increased territory and opulence of the empire have placed in the disposal of the executive magistrate.

Upon questions of reform, the habit of reflection to be encouraged, is a sober comparison of the constitution under which we live,—not with models of speculative perfection, but with the actual chance of obtaining a better. This turn of thought will generate a political disposition, equally removed from that puerile admiration of present establishments, which sees no fault, and can endure no change; and that distempered sensibility, which is alive only to perceptions of inconveniency, and is too impatient to be delivered from the uneasiness which it feels, to compute either the peril or expense of the remedy. Political innovations commonly produce many effects beside those that are intended. The direct consequence is often the least important. Incidental, remote, and unthought-of evil or advantages, frequently, exceed the good that is designed, or the mischief that is foreseen. It is from the silent and unobserved operation, from the obscure progress of causes set at work for different purposes, that the greatest revolutions take their rise. When Elizabeth, and her immediate successor, applied themselves to the encouragement and regulation of trade by many wise laws, they knew not, that together with wealth and industry, they were diffusing a consciousness of strength and independency, which would not long endure, under the forms of a mixed government, the dominion of arbitrary princes. When it was debated whether the mutiny act, the law by which the army is governed and maintained, should be temporary or perpetual, little else probably occurred to the advocates of an annual bill, than the expediency of retaining a control over the most dangerous prerogative of the crown, the direction and command of a standing army; whereas, in its effect, this single reservation has altered the whole frame and quality of the British constitution. For since, in consequence of the military system which prevails in neighbouring and rival nations, as well as on account of the internal exigencies of government, a standing army has become essential to the safety and administration of the empire, it enables parliament, by discontinuing this necessary provision, so to enforce its resolutions upon any other subject, as to render the king's dissent to a law which has received the approbation of both houses, too dangerous an experiment any longer to be advised. A contest between the king and parliament, cannot now be persevered in without a dissolution of the government. Lastly, when the constitution conferred upon the crown the nomination to all employments in the public service, the authors of this arrangement were

led to it, by the obvious propriety of leaving to a master the choice of his servants; and by the manifest inconveniency of engaging the national council, upon every vacancy, in those personal contests which attend elections to places of honour and emolument. Our ancestors did not observe that this disposition added an influence to the regal office, which, as the number and value of public employments increased, would supersede in a great measure the forms, and change the character, of the ancient constitution. They knew not, what the experience and reflection of modern ages have discovered, that patronage universally is power; that he who possesses in a sufficient degree the means of gratifying the desires of mankind after wealth and distinction, by whatever checks and forms his authority may be limited or disguised, will direct the management of public affairs. Whatever be the mechanism of the political engine, he will guide the motion. These instances are adduced in order to illustrate the proposition which we laid down, that, in politics, the most important and permanent effects have, for the most part, been incidental and unforeseen: and this proposition we inculcate, for the sake of the caution which teaches that changes ought not to be adventured upon without a *comprehensive* discernment of the consequences,—without a knowledge as well of the remote tendency, as of the immediate design. The courage of a statesman should resemble that of a commander, who, however regardless of personal danger, never forgets, that, with his own, he commits the lives and fortunes of a multitude; and who does not consider it as any proof of zeal or valour, to stake the safety of *other* men upon the success of a perilous or desperate enterprise.

There is one end of civil government peculiar to a good constitution, namely, the happiness of its subjects; there is another end essential to a good government, but common to it with many bad ones,—its own preservation. Observing that the best form of government would be defective, which did not provide for its own permanency, in our political reasonings we consider all such provisions as expedient; and are content to accept as a sufficient ground for a measure, or law, that it is necessary or conducive to the preservation of the constitution. Yet, in truth, such provisions are absolutely expedient, and such an excuse final, only whilst the constitution is worth preserving; that is, until it can be exchanged for a better. I premise this distinction, because many things in the English, as in every constitution, are to be vindicated and accounted for solely from their tendency to maintain the government in its present state, and the several parts of it in possession of the powers which the constitution, has assigned to them; and because I would wish it to be remarked, that such a consideration is always subordinate to another,—the value and usefulness of the constitution itself.

The Government of England, which has been sometimes called a mixed government, sometimes a limited monarchy, is formed by a combination of the three regular species of government; the monarchy, residing in the King; the aristocracy in the House of Lords; and the republic, being represented by the House of Commons. The perfection intended by such a scheme of government is, to unite the advantages of the several simple forms, and to exclude the inconve-

niences. To what degree this purpose is attained or attainable in the British constitution; wherein it is lost sight of or neglected; and by what means it may in any part be promoted with better success, the reader will be enabled to judge, by a separate recollection of these advantages and inconveniences, as enumerated in the preceding chapter, and a distinct application of each to the political condition of this country. We will present our remarks upon the subject in a brief account of the expedients by which the British constitution provides,

1st, For the interest of its subjects.

2dly, For its own preservation.

The contrivances for the first of these purposes, are the following:

In order to promote the establishment of salutary public laws, every citizen of the state is capable of becoming a member of the senate; and every senator possesses the right of propounding to the deliberation of the legislature whatever law he pleases.

Every district of the empire enjoys the privilege of choosing representatives, informed of the interests, and circumstances, and desires, of their constituents, and entitled by their situation to communicate that information to the national council. The meanest subject has some one whom he can call upon to bring forward his complaints and requests to public attention.

By annexing the right of voting for members of the House of Commons to different qualifications in different places, each order and profession of men in the community become virtually represented; that, is, men of all orders and professions, statesmen, courtiers, country gentlemen, lawyers, merchants, manufacturers, soldiers, sailors, interested in the prosperity, and experienced in the occupation, of their respective professions, obtain seats in parliament.

The elections, at the same time, are so connected with the influence of landed property, as to afford a certainty that a considerable number of men of great estates, will be returned to parliament; and are also so modified, that men the most eminent and successful in their respective professions, are the most likely, by their riches, or the weight of their stations, to prevail in these competitions.

The number, fortune, and quality, of the members; the variety of interests and characters amongst them; above all, the temporary duration of their power, and the change of men which every new election produces; are so many securities to the public, as well against the subjection of their judgments to any external dictation, as against the formation of a junto in their own body, sufficiently powerful to govern their decisions.

The representatives are so intermixed with the constituents, and the constituents with the rest of the people, that they cannot, without a partiality too flagrant to be endured, impose any burden upon the subject, in which they do not share themselves; nor scarcely can they adopt an advantageous regulation, in which their own interests will not participate of the advantage.

The proceedings and debates of parliament, and the parliamentary conduct of each representative, are known by the people at large.

The representative is so far dependant upon the constituent, and political importance upon public favour, that a member of parliament cannot more effectually recommend himself to eminence and advancement in the state, than by contriving and patronizing laws of public utility.

When intelligence of the condition, wants, and occasions, of the people, is thus collected from every quarter; when such a variety of invention, and so many understandings, are set at work upon the subject; it may be presumed, that the most eligible expedient, remedy, or improvement, will occur to some one or other: and when a wise counsel, or beneficial regulation, is once suggested, it may be expected, from the disposition of an assembly so constituted as the British House of Commons is, that it cannot fail of receiving the approbation of a majority.

To prevent those destructive contentions for the supreme power, which are sure to take place where the members of the state do not live under an acknowledged head, and a known rule of succession; to preserve tho people in tranquillity at home, by a speedy and vigorous execution of the laws; to protect their interest abroad, by strength and energy in military operations, by those advantages of decision, secrecy, and despatch, which belong to the resolutions of monarchical councils;—for these purposes, the constitution has committed the executive government to the administration and limited authority of an hereditary king.

In the defence of the empire; in the maintenance of its power, dignity, and privileges, with foreign nations; in the advancement of its trade by treaties and conventions: and in the providing for the general administration of municipal justice, by a proper choice and appointment of magistrates; the inclination of the king and of the people usually coincides: in this part, therefore, of the regal office, the constitution intrusts the prerogative with ample powers.

The dangers principally to be apprehended from regal government, relate to the two articles *taxation* and *punishment*. In every form of government, from which the people are excluded, it is the interest of the governors to get as much, and of the governed to give as little as they can; the power also of punishment, in the hands of an arbitrary prince, oftentimes becomes an engine of extortion, jealousy, and revenge. Wisely, therefore, hath the British constitution guarded the safety of the people, in these two points, by the most studious precautions.

Upon that of *taxation*, every law which, by the remotest construction, may be deemed to levy money upon the property of the subject, must originate, that is, must first be proposed and assented to, in the House of Commons: by which regulation, accompanying the weight which that assembly possesses in all its functions, the levying of taxes is almost exclusively reserved to the popular part of the constitution, who, it is presumed, will not tax themselves, nor their fellow-subjects, without being first convinced of the necessity of the aids which they grant.

The application also of the public supplies, is watched with the same circumspection as the assessment. Many taxes are annual; the produce of others is mortgaged, or appropriated to specific services:

the expenditure of all of them is accounted for in the House of Commons; as computations of the charge of the purpose, for which they are wanted, are previously submitted to the same tribunal.

In the infliction of *punishment* the power of the crown, and of the magistrates appointed by the crown, is confined by the most precise limitations: the guilt of the offender must be pronounced by twelve men of his own order, indifferently chosen out of the county where the offence was committed: the punishment, or the limits to which the punishment may be extended, are ascertained, and affixed to the crime, by laws which know not the person of the criminal.

And whereas arbitrary or clandestine confinement is the injury most to be dreaded from the strong hand of the executive government, because it deprives the prisoner at once of protection and defence, and delivers him into the power, and to the malicious or interested designs, of his enemies: the constitution has provided against this danger with double solicitude. The ancient writ of Habeas Corpus, the Habeas Corpus act of Charles the Second, and the practice and determinations of our sovereign courts of justice founded upon these laws, afford a complete remedy for every conceivable case of illegal imprisonment.*

Treason being that charge, under colour of which the destruction of an obnoxious individual is often sought; and government being at all times more immediately a party in the prosecution: the law, beside the general care with which it watches over the safety of the accused, in this case, sensible of the unequal contest in which the subject is engaged, has assisted his defence with extraordinary indulgences. By two statutes, enacted since the Revolution, every person indicted for high-treason shall have a copy of his indictment, a list of the witnesses to be produced, and of the jury impannelled, delivered to him ten days before the trial; he is also permitted, to make his defence by counsel;—privileges which are not allowed to the prisoner, in a trial for any other crime; and, what is of more importance to the party than all the rest, the testimony of two witnesses, at the least, is required to convict a person of treason; whereas, one positive witness is sufficient in almost every other species of accusation.

We proceed, in the second place, to inquire in what manner the constitution has provided for its own preservation; that is, in what

* Upon complaint in writing by, or on behalf of, any person in confinement, to any of the four courts of Westminster-Hall, in term-time, or to the lord-chancellor, or one of the judges, in the vacation: and upon a probable reason being suggested to question the legality of the detention; a writ is issued to the person in whose custody the complainant is alleged to be, commanding him within a certain limited and short time to produce the body of the prisoner, and the authority under which he is detained. Upon the return of the writ, strict and instantaneous obedience to which is enforced by very severe penalties, if no lawful cause of imprisonment appear, the court or judge, before whom the prisoner is brought, is authorized and bound to discharge him; even though he may have been committed by a secretary, or other high officer, of state, by the privy-council, or by the king in person: so that no subject of this realm can be held in confinement by any power, or under any pretence whatever, provided he can find means to convey his complaint to one of the four courts of Westminster-Hall, or, during their recess, to any of the judges of the same, unless all these several tribunals agree in determining his imprisonment to be legal. He may make application to them, in succession; and if one out of the number be found, who thinks the prisoner entitled to his liberty, that one possesses authority to restore it to him.

manner each part of the legislature is secured in the exercise of the powers assigned to it, from the encroachments of the other parts. This security is sometimes called the *balance of the constitution:* and the political equilibrium, which this phrase denotes, consists in two contrivances;—a balance of power, and a balance of interest. By a balance of power is meant, that there is no power possessed by one part of the legislature, the abuse or excess of which is not checked by some antagonist power, residing in another part. Thus the power of the two houses of parliament to frame laws, is checked by the king's negative: that, if laws subversive of regal government should obtain the consent of parliament, the reigning prince, by interposing his prerogative, may save the necessary rights and authority of his station. On the other hand, the arbitrary application of this negative is checked by the privilege which parliament possesses, of refusing supplies of money to the exigencies of the king's administration. The constitutional maxim, "that the king can do no wrong," is balanced by another maxim, not less constitutional, "that the illegal commands of the king do not justify those who assist, or concur, in carrying them into execution;" and by a second rule, subsidiary to this, "that the acts of the crown acquire not a legal force, until authenticated by the subscription of some of its great officers." The wisdom of this contrivance is worthy of observation. As the king could not be punished, without a civil war, the constitution exempts his person from trial or account; but lest this impunity should encourage a licentious exercise of dominion, various obstacles are opposed to the private will of the sovereign, when directed to illegal objects. The pleasure of the crown must be announced with certain solemnities, and attested by certain officers of state. In some cases, the royal order must be signified by a secretary of state; in others it must pass under the privy seal; and, in many, under the great seal. And when the king's command is regularly published, no mischief can be achieved by it, without the ministry and compliance of those to whom it is directed. Now all who either concur in an illegal order, by authenticating its publication with their seal or subscription, or who in any manner assist in carrying it into execution, subject themselves to prosecution and punishment, for the part they have taken; and are not permitted to plead or produce the command of the king in justification of their obedience.* But farther, the power of the crown to direct the military force of the kingdom, is balanced by the annual necessity of resorting to parliament for the maintenance and government of that force. The power of the king to declare war, is checked by the privilege of the House of Commons, to grant or withhold the

* Amongst the checks which parliament holds over the administration of public affairs, I forbear to mention the practice of addressing the king, to know by whose advice he resolved upon a particular measure; and of punishing the authors of that advice, for the counsel they had given. Not because I think this method either unconstitutional or improper; but for this reason,—that it does not so much subject the king to the control of parliament, as it supposes him to be already in subjection. For if the king were so far out of the reach of the resentment of the House of Commons, as to be able with safety to refuse the information requested, or to take upon himself the responsibility inquired after, there must be an end of all proceedings founded in this mode of application.

supplies by which the war must be carried on. The king's choice of his ministers is controlled by the obligation he is under of appointing those men to offices in the state, who are found capable of managing the affairs of his government with the two houses of parliament. Which consideration imposes such a necessity upon the crown, as hath in a great measure subdued the influence of favouritism: insomuch that it is become no uncommon spectacle in this country, to see men promoted by the king to the highest offices and richest preferments which he has in his power to bestow, who have been distinguished by their opposition to his personal inclinations.

By the *balance of interest*, which accompanies and gives efficacy to the *balance of power*, is meant this;—that the respective interests of the three estates of the empire are so disposed and adjusted, that whichever of the three shall attempt any encroachment, the other two will unite in resisting it. If the king should endeavour to extend his authority, by contracting the power and privileges of the Commons, the House of Lords would see their own dignity endangered by every advance which the Crown made to independency upon the resolutions of parliament. The admission of arbitrary power is no less formidable to the grandeur of the aristocracy, than it is fatal to the liberty of the republic; that is; it would reduce the nobility from the hereditary share they possess in the national councils, in which their real greatness consists, to the being made a part of the empty pageantry of a despotic court. On the other hand, if the House of Commons should intrench upon the distinct province, or usurp the established prerogative of the crown, the House of Lords would receive an instant alarm from every new stretch of popular power. In every contest in which the king may be engaged with the representative body, in defence of his established share of authority, he will find a sure ally, in the collective power of the nobility. An attachment to the monarchy, from which they derive their own distinction; the allurements of a court, in the habits and with the sentiments of which they have been brought up; their hatred of equality and of all levelling pretensions, which may ultimately affect the privileges, or even the existence, of their order; in short, every principle and every prejudice which are wont to actuate human conduct will determine their choice to the side and support of the crown. Lastly, if the nobles themselves should attempt to revive the superiorities which their ancestors exercised under the feudal constitution, the king and the people would alike remember, how the one had been insulted, and the other enslaved, by that barbarous tyranny. They would forget the natural opposition of their views and inclinations, when they saw themselves threatened with the return of a domination which was odious and intolerable to both.

THE reader will have observed, that in describing the British constitution, little notice has been taken of the House of Lords. The proper use and design of this part of the constitution, are the following:—First, to enable the king, by his right of bestowing the peerage, to reward the servants of the public, in a manner most grateful

to them, and at a small expense to the nation: secondly, to fortify the power and to secure the stability of regal government, by an order of men naturally allied to its interests: and, thirdly, to answer a purpose, which, though of superior importance to the other two, does not occur so readily to our observation; namely, to stem the progress of popular fury. Large bodies of men are subject to sudden frenzies. Opinions are sometimes circulated amongst a multitude without proof or examination, acquiring confidence and reputation, merely by being repeated from one to another; and passions founded upon these opinions, diffusing themselves with a rapidity which can neither be accounted for nor resisted, may agitate a country with the most violent commotions. Now the only way to stop the fermentation, is to divide the mass; that is, to erect different orders in the community, with separate prejudices and interests. And this may occasionally become the use of an hereditary nobility, invested with a share of legislation. Averse to those prejudices which actuate the minds of the vulgar; accustomed to contemn the clamour of the populace; disdaining to receive laws and opinions from their inferiors in rank; they will oppose resolutions which are founded in the folly and violence of the lower part of the community. Were the voice of the people always dictated by reflection; did every man, or even one man in a hundred, think for himself, or actually consider the measure he was about to prove or censure; or even were the common people tolerably stedfast in the judgment which they formed, I should hold the interference of a superior order not only superfluous, but wrong; for when every thing is allowed to difference of rank and education, which the actual state of these advantages deserves, that, after all, is most likely to be right and expedient, which appears to be so to the separate judgment and decision of a great majority of the nation; at least, that, in general, is right *for them* which is agreeable to their fixed opinions and desires. But when we observe what is urged as the public opinion, to be in truth the opinion only, or perhaps the feigned profession, of a few crafty leaders; that the numbers who join in the cry, serve only to swell and multiply the sound, without any accession of judgment, or exercise of understanding; and that oftentimes the wisest counsels have been thus overborne by tumult and uproar;—we may conceive occasions to arise, in which the commonwealth may be saved by the reluctance of the nobility to adopt the caprices, or to yield to the vehemence, of the common people. In expecting this advantage from an order of nobles, we do not suppose the nobility to be more unprejudiced than others; we only suppose that their prejudices will be different from, and may occasionally counteract those of others.

If the personal privileges of the peerage, which are usually so many injuries to the rest of the community, be restrained, I see little inconveniency in the increase of its number; for it is only dividing the same quantity of power amongst more hands, which is rather favourable to public freedom than otherwise.

The admission of a small number of ecclesiastics into the House of Lords, is but an equitable compensation to the clergy for the exclusion of their order from the House of Commons. They are a set of men, considerable by their number and property, as well as by their

influence, and the duties of their station; yet, whilst every other profession has those amongst the national representatives, who, being conversant in the same occupation, are able to state, and naturally disposed to support, the rights and interests of the class and calling to which they belong, the clergy alone are deprived of this advantage: which hardship is made up to them by introducing the prelacy into parliament; and if bishops, from gratitude or expectation, be more obsequious to the will of the crown than those who possess great temporal inheritances, they are properly inserted into that part of the constitution, from which much or frequent resistance to the measures of government is not expected.

I acknowledge, that I perceive no sufficient reason for exempting the persons of members of either house of parliament from arrest for debt. The councils or suffrage of a single senator, especially of one who in the management of his own affairs, may justly be suspected of a want of prudence or honesty, can seldom be so necessary to those of the public as to justify a departure from that wholesome policy, by which the laws of a commercial state punish and stigmatize insolvency. But whatever reason may be pleaded for their *personal* immunity, when this privilege of parliament is extended to domestics and retainers, or when it is permitted to impede or delay the course of judicial proceedings, it becomes an absurd sacrifice of equal justice to imaginary dignity.

There is nothing in the British constitution so remarkable, as the irregularity of the popular representation. The House of Commons consists of five hundred and fifty-eight members, of whom two hundred are elected by seven thousand constituents: so that a majority of these seven thousand, without any reasonable title to superior weight or influence in the state, may, under certain circumstances, decide a question against the opinion of as many millions. Or, to place the same object in another point of view; if my estate be situated in one county of the kingdom, I possess the ten-thousandth part of a single representative; if in another, the thousandth; if in a particular district, I may be one in twenty who choose two representatives; if in a still more favoured spot, I may enjoy the right of appointing two myself. If I have been born, or dwell, or have served an apprenticeship, in one town, I am represented in the national assembly by two deputies, in the choice of whom I exercise an actual and sensible share of power; if accident has thrown my birth, or habitation, or service, into another town, I have no representative at all, nor more power or concern in the election of those who make the laws by which I am governed, than if I was a subject of the Grand Signior:—and this partiality subsists without any pretence whatever of merit, or of propriety, to justify the preference of one place to another. Or, thirdly, to describe the state of national representation as it exists in reality, it may be affirmed, I believe, with truth, that about one half of the House of Commons obtain their seats in that assembly by the election of the people, the other half by purchase, or by the nomination of single proprietors of great estates.

This is a flagrant incongruity in the constitution; but it is one of those objections which strike most forcibly at first sight. The effect of all reasoning upon the subject is, to diminish the first impression; on

which account it deserves the more attentive examination, that we may be assured, before we adventure upon a reformation, that the magnitude of the evil justifies the danger of the experiment. In a few remarks that follow, we would be understood, in the first place, to decline all conference with those who wish to alter the form of government of these kingdoms. The reformers with whom we have to do, are they who, whilst they change this part of the system, would retain the rest. If any Englishman expect more happiness to his country under a republic, he may very consistently recommend a new modelling of elections to parliament; because if the King and House of Lords were laid aside, the present disproportionate representation would produce nothing but a confused and ill-digested oligarchy. In like manner we wave a controversy with those writers who insist upon representation as a *natural* right;* we consider it so far only as a right at all, as it conduces to public utility; that is, as it contributes to the establishment of good laws, or as it secures to the people the just administration of these laws. These effects depend upon the disposition and abilities of the national counsellors. Wherefore, if men, the most likely by their qualifications to know and to promote the public interest, be actually returned to parliament, it signifies little who returns them. If the properest persons be elected, what matters it by whom they are elected? At least no prudent statesmen would subvert long-established or even settled rules of representation, without a prospect of procuring wiser or better representatives. This then being well observed, let us, before we seek to obtain any thing more, consider duly what we already have. We *have* a House of Commons composed of five hundred and fifty-eight members, in which number are found the most considerable landholders and merchants of the kingdom; the heads of the army, the navy, and the law; the occupiers of great offices in the state; together with many private individuals, eminent by their knowledge, eloquence, or activity. Now if the country be not safe in such hands, in whose may it confide its interests? If such a number of such men be liable to the influence of corrupt motives, what assembly of men will be secure from the same danger? Does any new scheme of representation promise to collect together more wisdom or to produce firmer integrity? In this view of the subject, and attending not to ideas of order and proportion (of which many minds are much enamoured), but to effects alone, we may discover just excuses for those parts of the present representation which appear to a hasty observer most exceptionable and absurd. It should be remembered, as a maxim extremely applicable to this subject, that no order or assembly of men whatever can long maintain their place and authority in a mixed government, of which the members do not individually possess a respectable share of personal importance. Now, whatever may be the defects of the present arrangement, it infallibly secures a great weight of property to the

* If this right be *natural*, no doubt it must be equal; and the right, we may add of one sex, as well as of the other. Whereas every plan of representation that we have heard of, begins by excluding the votes of women; thus cutting off, at a single stroke, one half of the public from a right which is asserted to be inherent in all; a right too, as some represent it, not only universal, but inalienable, and indefeasible, and imprescriptible.

House of Commons, by rendering many seats in that house accessible to men of large fortunes, and to such men alone. By which means those characters are engaged in the defence of the separate rights and interests of this branch of the legislature, that are best able to support its claims. The constitution of most of the small boroughs, especially the burgage tenure, contributes, though undesignedly, to the same effect: for the appointment of the representatives we find commonly annexed to certain great inheritances. Elections purely popular are in this respect uncertain: in times of tranquillity, the natural ascendancy of wealth will prevail; but when the minds of men are inflamed by political dissensions, this influence often yields to more impetuous motives. The variety of tenures and qualifications, upon which the right of voting is founded, appears to me a recommendation of the mode which now subsists, as it tends to introduce into parliament a corresponding mixture of characters and professions. It has been long observed that conspicuous abilities are most frequently found with the representatives of small boroughs. And this is nothing more than what the laws of human conduct might teach us to expect; when such boroughs are set to sale, those men are likely to become purchasers who are enabled by their talents to make the best of their bargain: when a seat is not sold, but given by the opulent proprietor of a burgage tenure, the patron finds his own interest consulted by the reputation and abilities of the member whom he nominates. If certain of the nobility hold the appointment of some part of the House of Commons, it serves to maintain that alliance between the two branches of the legislature which no good citizen would wish to see dissevered: it helps to keep the government of the country in the House of Commons, in which it would not perhaps long continue to reside, if so powerful and wealthy a part of the nation as the peerage compose, were excluded from all share and interest in its constitution. If there be a few boroughs so circumstanced as to lie at the disposal of the crown, whilst the number of such is known and small, they may be tolerated with little danger. For where would be the impropriety or the inconveniency, if the king should at once nominate a limited number of his servants to seats in parliament: or, what is the same thing, if seats in parliament were annexed to the possession of certain of the most efficient and responsible offices in the state? The present representation, after all these deductions, and under the confusion in which it confessedly lies, is still in such a degree popular, or rather the representatives are so connected with the mass of the community by a society of interests and passions, that the will of the people, when it is determined, permanent, and general, almost always at length prevails.

Upon the whole, in the several plans which have been suggested, of an equal or a reformed representation, it will be difficult to discover any proposal that has a tendency to throw more of the business of the nation into the House of Commons, or to collect a set of men more fit to transact that business, or in general more interested in the national happiness and prosperity. One consequence, however, may be expected from these projects, namely, "less flexibility to the influence of the crown." And since the diminution of this influence is the declared and perhaps the sole design of the various schemes that have

been produced, whether for regulating the elections, contracting the duration, or for purifying the constitution of parliament by the exclusion of placemen and pensioners; it is obvious to remark, that the more apt and natural, as well as the more safe and quiet way of attaining the same end, would be by a direct reduction of the patronage of the crown, which might be effected to a certain extent without hazarding farther consequences. Superfluous and exorbitant emoluments of office may not only be suppressed for the present; but provisions of law be devised, which should for the future restrain within certain limits the number and value of the offices in the donation of the king.

But whilst we dispute concerning different schemes of reformation, all directed to the same end, a previous doubt occurs in the debate; whether the end itself be good, or safe;—whether the influence so loudly complained of, can be destroyed, or even much diminished, without danger to the state. Whilst the zeal of some men beholds this influence with a jealousy which nothing but its entire abolition can appease, many wise and virtuous politicians deem a considerable portion of it to be as necessary a part of the British constitution, as any other ingredient in the composition;—to be that, indeed, which gives cohesion and solidity to the whole. Were the measures of government, say they, opposed from nothing but principle, government ought to have nothing but the rectitude of its measures to support them: but since opposition springs from other motives, government must possess an influence to counteract these motives; to produce, not a bias of the passions, but a neutrality;—it must have some weight to cast into the scale, to set the balance even. It is the nature of power, always to press upon the boundaries which confine it. Licentiousness, faction, envy, impatience of control or inferiority: the secret pleasure of mortifying the great, or the hope of dispossessing them; a constant willingness to question and thwart whatever is dictated or even proposed by another; a disposition common to all bodies of men to extend the claims and authority of their orders; above all, that love of power and of shewing it, which resides more or less in every human breast, and which, in popular assemblies, is inflamed, like every other passion, by communication and encouragement; these motives, added to private designs and resentments, cherished also by popular acclamation, and operating upon the great share of power already possessed by the House of Commons, might induce a majority, or at least a large party of men in that assembly, to unite in endeavouring to draw to themselves the whole government of the state; or, at least, so to obstruct the conduct of public affairs, by a wanton and perverse opposition, as to render it impossible for the wisest statesman to carry forward the business of the nation with success or satisfaction.

Some passages of our national history afford grounds for these apprehensions.—Before the accession of James the First, or, at least, during the reigns of his three immediate predecessors, the government of England was a government by force; that is, the king carried his measures in parliament by *intimidation*. A sense of personal danger kept the members of the House of Commons in subjection. A conjunction of fortunate causes delivered, at last, the parliament and nation from slavery. That overbearing system which had declined in

the hands of James, expired early in the reign of his son. After the Restoration, there succeeded in its place, and, since the Revolution, has been methodically pursued, the more successful expedient of *influence*. Now we remember what passed between the loss of terror, and the establishment of influence. The transactions of that interval, whatever we may think of their occasion or effect, no friend of regal government would wish to see revived.—But the affairs of this kingdom afford a more recent attestation to the same doctrine. In the British colonies of North America, the late assemblies possessed much of the power and constitution of our House of Commons. The king and government of Great Britain held no patronage in the country, which could create attachment and influence sufficient to counteract that restless arrogating spirit, which, in popular assemblies, when left to itself, will never brook an authority that checks and interferes with its own. To this cause, excited perhaps by some unseasonable provocations, we may attribute, as to their true and proper original (we will not say the misfortunes, but), the changes that have taken place in the British empire. The admonition which such examples suggest, will have its weight with those who are content with the general frame of the English constitution: and who consider stability amongst the first perfections of any government.

We protest, however, against any construction, by which what is here said shall be attempted to be applied to the justification of bribery, or of any clandestine reward or solicitation whatever. The very secrecy of such negociations confesses or begets a consciousness of guilt; which when the mind is once taught to endure without uneasiness, the character is prepared for every compliance; and there is the greater danger in these corrupt practices, as the extent of their operation is unlimited and unknown. Our apology relates solely to that influence, which results from the acceptance or expectation of public preferments. Nor does the influence which we defend, require any sacrifice of personal probity. In political, above all other subjects, the arguments, or rather the conjectures, on each side of the question, are often so equally poised, that the wisest judgments may be held in suspence; these I call subjects of *indifference*. But again; when the subject is not *indifferent* in itself, it will appear such to a great part of those to whom it is proposed, for want of information, or reflection, or experience, or of capacity, to collect and weigh the reasons by which either side is supported. These are subjects of *apparent indifference*. This indifference occurs still more frequently in personal contests; in which we do not often discover any reason of public utility for the preference of one competitor to another. These cases compose the province of influence: that is, the decision in these cases will inevitably be determined by influence of some sort or other. The only doubt is, what influence shall be admitted. If you remove the influence of the crown, it is only to make way for influence from a different quarter. If motives of expectation and gratitude be withdrawn, other motives will succeed in their place, acting probably in an opposite direction, but equally irrelative and external to the proper merits of the question. There exist, as we have seen, passions in the human heart, which will always make a strong party against the executive power of a mixed government. According as the disposition of par-

liament is friendly or adverse to the recommendation of the crown in matters which are really or apparently indifferent, as indifference hath been now explained, the business of the empire will be transacted with ease and convenience, or embarrassed with endless contention and difficulty. Nor is it a conclusion founded in justice, or warranted by experience, that because men are induced by views of interest to yield their consent to measures concerning which their judgment decides nothing, they may be brought by the same influence to act in deliberate opposition to knowledge and duty. Whoever reviews the operations of government in this country since the Revolution, will find few even of the most questionable measures of administration, about which the best instructed jndgment might not have doubted at the time: but of which we may affirm with certainty, they were *indifferent* to the greatest part of those who concurred in them. From the success, or the facility, with which they who dealt out the patronage of the crown carried measures like these, ought we to conclude, that a similar application of honours and emoluments would procure the consent of parliaments to counsels evidently detrimental to the common welfare? Is there not on the contrary, more reason to fear, that the prerogative, if deprived of influence, would not be long able to support itself? For when we reflect upon the power of the House of Commons to extort a compliance with its resolutions from the other parts of the legislature; or to put to death the constitution by a refusal of the annual grants of money to the support of the necessary functions of government; when we reflect also what motives there are, which, in the vicissitudes of political interests and passions, may one day arm and point this power against the executive magistrate; when we attend to these considerations, we shall be led perhaps to acknowledge, that there is not more of paradox than of truth in that important, but much decried apophthegm, "that an independent parliament is incompatible with the existence of the monarchy."

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Administration of Justice.

THE first maxim of a free state is, that the laws be made by one set of men, and administered by another; in other words, that the legislative and judicial characters be kept separate. When these offices are united in the same person or assembly, particular laws are made for particular cases, springing oftentimes from partial motives, and directed to private ends: whilst they are kept separate, general laws are made by one body of men, without foreseeing whom they may affect; and, when made, must be applied by the other, let them affect whom they will.

For the sake of illustration, let it be supposed, in this country, either that, parliaments being laid aside, the courts of Westminster Hall made their own laws; or that the two houses of parliament, with the King at their head, tried and decided causes at their bar: it is evident, in the first place, that the decisions of such a judicature

would be so many laws; and in the second place, that, when the parties and the interests to be affected by the law were known, the inclinations of the law-makers would inevitably attach on one side or the other; and that where there were neither any fixed rules to regulate their determinations, nor any superior power to control their proceedings, these inclinations would interfere with the integrity of public justice. The consequence of which must be, that the subjects of such a constitution would live either without any constant laws, that is, without any known pre-established rules of adjudication whatever; or under laws made for particular persons, and partaking of the contradictions and iniquity of the motives to which they owed their origin.

Which dangers, by the division of the legislative and judicial functions, are in this country effectually provided against. Parliament knows not the individuals upon whom its acts will operate; it has no cases or parties before it; no private designs to serve: consequently, its resolutions will be suggested by the consideration of universal effects and tendencies, which always produces impartial, and commonly advantageous regulations. When laws are made, courts of justice, whatever be the disposition of the judges, must abide by them; for the legislative being necessarily the supreme power of the state, the judicial and every other power is accountable to that: and it cannot be doubted that the persons who possess the sovereign authority of government, will be tenacious of the laws which they themselves prescribe, and sufficiently jealous of the assumption of dispensing and legislative power by any others.

This fundamental rule of civil jurisprudence is violated in the case of acts of attainder or confiscation, in bills of pains and penalties, and in all *ex post făcto* laws whatever, in which parliament exercises the double office of legislature and judge. And whoever either understands the value of the rule itself, or collects the history of those instances in which it has been invaded, will be induced, I believe, to acknowledge, that it had been wiser and safer never to have departed from it. He will confess at least, that nothing but the most manifest and immediate peril of the commonwealth will justify a repetition of these dangerous examples. If the laws in being do not punish an offender, let him go unpunished; let the legislature, admonished of the defect of the laws, provide against the commission of future crimes of the same sort. The escape of one delinquent can never produce so much harm to the community as may arise from the infraction of a rule upon which the purity of public justice, and the existence of civil liberty, essentially depend.

The next security for the impartial administration of justice, especially in decisions to which government is a party, is the independency of the judges. As protection against every illegal attack upon the rights of the subject by the servants of the crown is to be sought for from these tribunals, the judges of the land become not unfrequently the arbitrators between the king and the people, on which account they ought to be independent of either; or, what is the same thing, equally dependant upon both; that is, if they be appointed by the one, they should be removable only by the other. This was the policy which dictated that memorable improvement in our constitu-

tion, by which the judges, who before the Revolution held their offices during the pleasure of the king, can now be deprived of them only by an address from both houses of parliament; as the most regular, solemn, and authentic way, by which the dissatisfaction of the people can be expressed. To make this independency of the judges complete, the public salaries of their office ought not only to be certain both in amount and continuance, but so liberal as to secure their integrity from the temptation of secret bribes; which liberality will answer also the farther purpose of preserving their jurisdiction from contempt, and their characters from suspicion; as well as of rendering the office worthy of the ambition of men of eminence in their profession.

A third precaution to be observed in the formation of courts of justice is, that the number of the judges be small. For, beside that the violence and tumult inseparable from large assemblies are inconsistent with the patience, method, and attention, requisite in judicial investigations; beside that all passions and prejudices act with augmented force upon a collected multitude; beside these objections, judges, when they are numerous, *divide* the shame of an unjust determination; they shelter themselves under one another's example; each man thinks his own character hid in the crowd: for which reason, the judges ought always to be so few, as that the conduct of each may be conspicuous to public observation; that each may be responsible in his separate and particular reputation for the decisions in which he concurs. The truth of the above remark has been exemplified in this country, in the effects of that wise regulation which transferred the trial of parliamentary elections from the House of Commons at large to a select committee of that house, composed of thirteen members. This alteration, simply by reducing the number of the judges, and, in consequence of that reduction, exposing the judicial conduct of each to public animadversion, has given to a judicature, which had been long swayed by interest and solicitation, the solemnity and virtue of the most upright tribunals.—I should prefer an even to an odd number of judges, and four to almost any other number: for, in this number, beside that it sufficiently consults the idea of separate responsibility, nothing can be decided but by a majority of three to one: and when we consider that every decision establishes a perpetual precedent, we shall allow that it ought to proceed from an authority not less than this. If the court be equally divided nothing is done; things remain as they were; with some inconveniency, indeed, to the parties, but without the danger to the public of a hasty precedent.

A fourth requisite in the constitution of a court of justice, and equivalent to many checks upon the discretion of judges, is, that its proceedings be carried on in public *apertis foribus;* not only before a promiscuous concourse of by-standers, bnt in the audience of the whole profession of the law. The opinion of the Bar concerning what passes, will be impartial; and will commonly guide that of the public. The most corrupt judge will fear to indulge his dishonest wishes in the presence of such an assembly: he must encounter, what few can support, the censure of his equals and companions, together with the indignation and reproaches of his country.

Something is also gained to the public by appointing two or three courts of concurrent jurisdiction, that it may remain in the option of the suitor to which he will resort. By this means a tribunal which may happen to be occupied by ignorant or suspected judges, will be deserted for others that possess more of the confidence of the nation.

But lastly, if several courts, co-ordinate to, and independent of each other, subsist together in the country, it seems necessary that the appeals from all of them should meet and terminate in the same judicature; in order that one supreme tribunal, by whose final sentence all others are bound and concluded, may superintend and preside over the rest. This constitution is necessary for two purposes; —to preserve a uniformity in the decisions of inferior courts and to maintain to each the proper limits of its jurisdiction. Without a common superior, different courts might establish contradictory rules of adjudication, and the contradiction be final and without remedy; the same question might receive opposite determinations, according as it was brought before one court or another, and the determination in each be ultimate and irreversible. A common appellant jurisdiction prevents or puts an end to this confusion. For when the judgments upon appeals are consistent (which may be expected, whilst it is the same court which is at last resorted to), the different courts from which the appeals are brought, will be reduced to a like consistency with one another. Moreover, if questions arise between courts independent of each other, concerning the extent and boundaries of their respective jurisdiction, as each will be desirous of enlarging its own, an authority which both acknowledge can alone adjust the controversy. Such a power, therefore, must reside somewhere, lest the rights and repose of the country be distracted by the endless opposition and mutual encroachments of its courts of justice.

There are two kinds of judicature; the one where the office of the judge is permanent in the same person, and consequently where the judge is appointed and known long before the trial; the other, where the judge is determined by lot at the time of the trial, and for that turn only. The one may be called a *fixed* the other a *casual* judicature. From the former may be expected those qualifications which are preferred and sought for in the choice of judges, and that knowledge and readiness which result from experience in the office. But then, as the judge is known beforehand, he is accessible to the parties; there exists a possibility of secret management and undue practices; or, in contests between the crown and the subject, the judge appointed by the crown may be suspected of partiality to his patron, or of entertaining inclinations favourable to the authority from which he derives his own. The advantage attending the second kind of judicature, is indifferency; the defect, the want of that legal science which produces uniformity and justice in legal decisions. The construction of English courts of law, in which causes are tried by a jury, with the assistance of a judge, combines the two species with peculiar success. This admirable contrivance unites the wisdom of a fixed with the integrity of a casual judicature; and avoids, in a great measure, the inconveniences of both. The judge imparts to the jury the benefit of his erudition and experience; the jury, by their

disinterestedness, check any corrupt partialities which previous application may have produced in the judge. If the determination were left to the judge, the party might suffer under the superior interest of his adversary: if it were left to an uninstructed jury, his rights would be in still greater danger, from the ignorance of those who were to decide upon them. The present wise admixture of chance and choice in the constitution of the court in which his cause is tried, guards him equally against the fear of injury from either of these causes.

In proportion to the acknowledged excellency of this mode of trial, every deviation from it ought to be watched with vigilance, and admitted by the legislature with caution and reluctance. Summary convictions before justices of the peace, especially for offences against the game-laws; courts of conscience; extending the jurisdiction of courts of equity; urging too far the distinction between questions of law and matters of fact;—are all so many infringements upon this great charter of public safety.

Nevertheless, the trial by jury is sometimes found inadequate to the administration of equal justice. This imperfection takes place chiefly in disputes in which some popular passion or prejudice intervenes; as where a particular order of men advance claims upon the rest of the community, which is the case of the clergy contending for tithes; or where an order of men are obnoxious by their profession, as are officers of the revenue, bailiffs, bailiffs' followers, and other low ministers of the law; or where one of the parties has an interest in common with the general interest of the jurors, and that of the other is opposed to it, as in contests between landlords and tenants, between lords of manors and the holders of estates under them; or, lastly, where the minds of men are inflamed by political dissensions or religious hatred. These prejudices act most powerfully upon the common people; of which order, juries are made up. The force and danger of them are also increased by the very circumstance of taking juries out of the county in which the subject of dispute arises. In the neighbourhood of the parties, the cause is often pre-judged: and these secret decisions of the mind proceed commonly more upon sentiments of favour or hatred,—upon some opinion concerning the sect, family, profession, character, connexions or circumstances, of the parties,—than upon any knowledge or discussion of the proper merits of the question. More exact justice would in many instances, be rendered to the suitors, if the determination were left entirely to the judges; provided we could depend upon the same purity of conduct, when the power of these magistrates was enlarged, which they have long manifested in the exercise of a mixed and restrained authority. But this is an experiment too big with public danger to be hazarded. The effects, however, of some local prejudices might be safely obviated by a law empowering the court in which the action is brought, to send the cause to trial in a distant county; the expenses attending the change of place always falling upon the party who applied for it.

There is a second division of courts of justice, which presents a new alternative of difficulties. Either one, two, or a few, sovereign courts may be erected in the metropolis, for the whole kingdom to

resort to; or courts of local jurisdiction may be fixed in various provinces and districts of the empire. Great, though opposite, inconveniences attend each arrangement. If the court be remote and solemn, it becomes, by these very qualities, expensive and dilatory: the expense is unavoidably increased when witnessess, parties and agents, must be brought to attend from distant parts of the country: and, where the whole judicial business of a large nation is collected into a few superior tribunals, it will be found impossible, even if the prolixity of forms which retards the progress of causes were removed, to give a prompt hearing to every complaint, or an immediate answer to any. On the other hand, if, to remedy these evils, and to render the administration of justice cheap and speedy, domestic and summary tribunals be erected in each neighbourhood, the advantage of such courts will be accompanied with all the dangers of ignorance and partiality, and with the certain mischief of confusion and contrariety in their decisions. The law of England, by its circuit, or itinerary courts, contains, a provision for the distribution of private justice, in a great measure relieved from both these objections. As the presiding magistrate comes into the country, a stranger to its prejudices, rivalships, and connexions, he brings with him none of those attachments and regards which are so apt to pervert the course of justice when the parties and the judges inhabit the same neighbourhood. Again: as this magistrate is usually one of the judges of the supreme tribunals of the kingdom, and has passed his life in the study and administration of the laws, he possesses, it may be presumed, those professional qualifications which befit the dignity and importance of his station. Lastly, as both he, and the advocates who accompany him in his circuit, are employed in the business of those superior courts (to which also their proceedings are amenable), they will naturally conduct themselves by the rules of adjudication which they have applied or learned there; and by this means maintain, what constitutes a principal perfection of civil government, one law of the land in every part and district of the empire.

Next to the constitution of courts of justice, we are naturally led to consider the maxims which ought to guide their proceedings; and, upon this subject, the chief inquiry will be, how far, and for what reasons, it is expedient to adhere to former determinations; or whether it be necessary for judges to attend to any other consideration than the apparent and particular equity of the case before them. Now, although to assert that precedents established by one set of judges ought to be incontrovertible by their successors in the same jurisdiction, or by those who exercise a higher, would be to attribute to the sentence of those judges all the authority we ascribe to the most solemn acts of the legislature; yet the general security of private rights, and of civil life, requires that such precedents, especially if they have been confirmed by repeated adjudication, should not be overthrown, without a detection of manifest error, or without some imputation of dishonesty upon the court by whose judgment the question was first decided. And this deference to prior decisions is founded upon two reasons; first, that the discretion of judges may be bound down by positive rules; and secondly, that the subject, upon every occasion in which his legal interest is concerned, may

know before-hand how to act, and what to expect. To set judges free from any obligation to conform themselves to the decisions of their predecessors, would be to lay open a latitude of judging with which no description of men can safely be intrusted; it would be to allow space for the exercise of those concealed partialities, which, since they cannot by any human policy be excluded, ought to be confined by boundaries and landmarks. It is in vain to allege, that the superintendency of parliament is always at hand to control and punish abuses of judicial discretion. By what rules can parliament proceed? How shall they pronounce a decision to be wrong, where there exists no acknowledged measure or standard of what is right; which in a multitude of instances, would be the case, if prior determinations were no longer to be appealed to?

Diminishing the danger of partiality, is one thing gained by adhering to precedents; but not the principal thing. The subject of every system of laws must expect that decision in his own case, which he knows that others have received in cases similar to his. If he expect not this, he can expect nothing. There exists no other rule or principle of reasoning, by which he can foretell, or even conjecture, the event of a judicial contest. To remove therefore the grounds of this expectation, by rejecting the force and authority of precedents, is to entail upon the subject the worst property of slavery,—to have no assurance of his rights, or knowledge of his duty. The quiet also of the country, as well as the confidence and satisfaction of each man's mind requires uniformity in judicial proceedings. Nothing quells a spirit of litigation, like despair of success: therefore nothing so completely puts an end to lawsuits, as a rigid adherence to known rules of adjudication. Whilst the event is uncertain, which it ever must be whilst it is uncertain whether former determinations upon the same subject will be followed or not, lawsuits will be endless and innumerable: men will commonly engage in them, either from the hope of prevailing in their claims which the smallest chance is sufficient to encourage; or with the design of intimidating their adversary by the terrors of a dubious litigation. When justice is rendered to the parties, only half the business of a court of justice is done: the more important part of its office remains: to put an end, for the future, to every fear, and quarrel, and expense, upon the same point; and so to regulate its proceedings, that not only a doubt once decided may be stirred no more, but that the whole train of lawsuits, which issue from one uncertainty, may die with the parent-question. Now, this advantage can be attained only by considering each decision as a direction to succeeding judges. And it should be observed, that every departure from former determinations, especially if they have been often repeated or long submitted to, shakes the stability of all legal title. It is not fixing a point anew; it is leaving every thing unfixed. For by the same stretch of power by which the present race of judges take upon them to contradict the judgment of their predecessors, those who try the question next may set aside theirs.

From an adherence however to precedents, by which so much is gained to the public, two consequences arise which are often lamented: the hardship of particular determinations, and the intricacy

of the law as a science. To the first of these complaints, we must apply this reflection:—"That uniformity is of more importance than equity, in proportion as a general uncertainty would be a greater evil than particular injustice." The second is attended with no greater inconveniency than that of erecting the practice of the law into a separate profession; which this reason, we allow, makes necessary; for if we attribute so much authority to precedents, it is expedient that they be known, in every cause, both to the advocates and to the judge: this knowledge cannot be general, since it is the fruit oftentimes of laborious research, or demands a memory stored with long-collected erudition.

To a mind revolving upon the subject of human jurisprudence, there frequently occurs this question:—Why, since the maxims of natural justice are few and evident, do there arise so many doubts and controversies in their application? Or, in other words, how comes it to pass, that although the principles of the law of nature be simple, and for the most part sufficiently obvious, there should exist nevertheless, in every system of municipal laws, and in the actual administration of relative justice, numerous uncertainties and acknowledged difficulties? Whence it may be asked, so much room for litigation, and so many subsisting disputes, if the rules of human duty be neither obscure nor dubious? If a system of morality, containing both the precepts of revelation and the deductions of reason, may be comprised within the compass of one moderate volume; and the moralist be able, as he pretends, to describe the rights and obligations of mankind, in all the different relations they may hold to one another; what need of those codes of positive and particular institutions, of those tomes of statutes, and reports, which require the employment of a long life even to peruse? And this question is immediately connected with the argument which has been discussed in the preceding paragraph: for, unless there be found some greater uncertainty in the law of nature, or what may be called natural equity, when it comes to be applied to real cases and to actual adjudication, than what appears in the rules and principles of the science, as delivered in the writings of those who treat of the subject, it were better that the determination of every cause should be left to the conscience of the judge, unfettered by precedents and authorities; since the very purpose for which these are introduced, is to give a certainty to judicial proceedings, which such proceedings would want without them.

Now, to account for the existence of so many sources of litigation, notwithstanding the clearness and perfection of natural justice, it should be observed, in the first place, that treatises of morality always suppose facts to be ascertained; and not only so, but the intention likewise of the parties to be known and laid bare. For example: when we pronounce that promises ought to be fulfilled in that sense in which the promiser apprehended, at the time of making the promise, the other party received and understood it; the apprehension of one side, and the expectation of the other, must be discovered,

before this rule can be reduced to practice, or applied to the determination of any actual dispute. Wherefore the discussion of facts which the moralist supposes to be settled, the discovery of intentions which he presumes to be known, still remain to exercise the inquiry of courts of justice. And as these facts and intentions are often to be inferred, or rather conjectured, from obscure indications, from suspicious testimony, or from a comparison of opposite and contending probabilities, they afford a never-failing supply of doubt and litigation. For which reason, as hath been observed in a former part of this work, the science of morality is to be considered rather as a direction to the parties, who are conscious of their own thoughts, and motives, and designs, to which consciousness the teacher of morality constantly appeals; than as a guide to the judge, or to any third person, whose arbitration must proceed upon rules of evidence, and maxims of credibility, with which the moralist has no concern.

Secondly; there exist a multitude of cases, in which the law of nature, that is, the law of public expediency, prescribes nothing, except that some certain rule be adhered to, and that the rule actually established, be preserved; it either being indifferent what rule obtains, or, out of many rules, no one being so much more advantageous than the rest, as to recompense the inconveniency of an alteration. In all such cases, the law of nature sends us to the law of the land. She directs that either some fixed rule be introduced by an act of the legislature, or that the rule which accident, or custom, or common consent, hath already established, be steadily maintained. Thus, in the descent of lands, or the inheritance of personals from intestate proprietors, whether the kindred of the grandmother, or of the great-grandmother, shall be preferred in the succession; whether the degrees of consanguinity shall be computed through the common ancestor, or from him; whether the widow shall take a third or a moiety of her husband's fortune: whether sons shall be preferred to daughters, or the elder to the younger; whether the distinction of age shall be regarded amongst sisters, as well as between brothers; in these, and in a great variety of questions which the same subject supplies, the law of nature determines nothing. The only answer she returns to our inquiries is, that some certain and general rule be laid down by public authority; be obeyed when laid down; and that the quiet of the country be not disturbed, nor the expectation of heirs frustrated, by capricious innovations. This silence or neutrality of the law of nature, which we have exemplified in the case of intestacy, holds concerning a great part of the questions that relate to the right of acquisition of property. Recourse then must necessarily be had to statutes, or precedents, or usage, to fix what the law of nature has left loose. The interpretation of these statutes, the search after precedents, the investigation of customs, compose therefore an unavoidable, and at the same time a large and intricate, portion of forensic business. Positive constitutions or judicial authorities are, in like manner, wanted to give precision to many things which are in their nature *indeterminate*. The age of legal discretion; at what time of life a person shall be deemed competent to the performance of any act which may bind his property; whether at twenty, or twenty-one, or earlier or later, or at some point of time between these years; can

only be ascertained by a positive rule of the society to which the party belongs. The line has not been drawn by nature; the human understanding advancing to maturity by insensible degrees, and its progress varying in different individuals. Yet it is necessary, for the sake of mutual security, that a precise age be fixed, and that what is fixed be known to all. It is on these occasions that the intervention of law supplies the inconstancy of nature. Again there are other things which are perfectly *arbitrary*, and capable of no certainty but what is given to them, by positive regulation. It is fit that a limited time should be assigned to defendants, to plead to the complaints alleged against them; and also that the default of pleading within a certain time should be taken for a confession of the charge: but to how many days or months that term should be extended, though necessary to be known with certainty, cannot be known at all by any information which the law of nature affords. And the same remark seems applicable to almost all those rules of proceeding, which constitute what is called the practice of the court: as they cannot be traced out by reasoning, they must be settled by authority.

Thirdly; in contracts, whether express or implied, which involve a great number of conditions; as in those which are entered into between masters and servants, principals and agents; many also of merchandize, or for works of art; in some likewise which relate to the negociation of money or bills, or to the acceptance of credit or security; the original design and expectation of the parties was, that both sides should be guided by the course and custom of the country in transactions of the same sort. Consequently, when these contracts come to be disputed, natural justice can only refer to that custom. But as such customs are not always sufficiently uniform or notorious, but often to be collected from the production and comparison of instances and accounts repugnant to one another; and each custom being only that after all, which amongst a variety of usages seems to predominate; we have *here* also ample room for doubt and contest.

Fourthly; as the law of nature, founded in the very construction of human society, which is formed to endure through a series of perishing generations, requires that the just engagements a man enters into should continue in force beyond his own life; it follows, that the private rights of persons frequently depend upon what has been transacted, in times remote from the present, by their ancestors or predecessors, by those under whom they claim, or to whose obligations they have succeeded. Thus the questions which usually arise between lords of manors and their tenants, between the king and those who claim royal franchises, or between them and the persons affected by these franchises, depend upon the terms of the original grant. In like manner, every dispute concerning tithes, in which an exemption or composition is pleaded, depends upon the agreement which took place between the predecessor of the claimant and the ancient owner of the land. The appeal to these grants and agreements is dictated by natural equity, as well as by the municipal law; but concerning the existence, or the conditions, of such old covenants, doubts will perpetually occur, to which the law of nature affords no solution. The loss or decay of records, the perishableness of living memory, the corruption and carelessness of tradition, all conspire to

multiply uncertainties upon this head; what cannot be produced or proved, must be left to loose and fallible presumption. Under the same head may be included another topic of altercation;—the tracing out of boundaries, which time, or neglect, or unity of possession, or mixture of occupation, has confounded or obliterated. To which should be added, a difficulty which often presents itself in disputes concerning rights of *way*, both public and private, and of those easements which one man claims in another man's property; namely, that of distinguishing, after a lapse of years, the use of an indulgence from the exercise of a right.

Fifthly; the quantity or extent of any injury, even when the cause and author of it are known, is often dubious and undefined. If the injury consist in the loss of some specific right, the value of the right measures the amount of the injury: but what a man may have suffered in his person from an assault; in his reputation, by slander; or in the comfort of his life, by the seduction of a wife or daughter; or what sum of money shall be deemed a reparation for damages such as these; cannot be ascertained by any rules which the law of nature supplies. The law of nature commands, that reparation be made; and adds to her command, that, when the aggressor and the sufferer disagree, the damage be assessed by authorized and indifferent arbitrators. Here then recourse must be had to courts of law, not only with the permission, but in some measure by the direction, of natural justice.

Sixthly; when controversies arise in the interpretation of written laws, they for the most part arise upon some contingency which the composer of the law did not foresee or think of. In the adjudication of such cases, this dilemma presents itself: if the laws be permitted to operate only upon the cases which were actually contemplated by the law-makers, they will always be found defective; if they be extended to every case to which the reasoning, and spirit, and expediency, of the provision seem to belong, without any farther evidence of the intention of the legislature, we shall allow to the judges a liberty of applying the law, which will fall very little short of the power of making it. If a literal construction be adhered to, the law will often fail of its end: if a loose and vague exposition be admitted, the law might as well never have been enacted; for this license will bring back into the subject all the discretion and uncertainty which it was the design of the legislature to take away. Courts of justice are, and always must be, embarrassed by these opposite difficulties; and as it never can be known beforehand, in what degree either consideration may prevail in the mind of the judge, there remains an unavoidable cause of doubt, and a place for contention.

Seventhly; the deliberations of courts of justice upon every *new* question, are encumbered with additional difficulties, in consequence of the authority which the judgment of the court possesses, as a precedent to future judicatures; which authority appertains not only to the conclusions the court delivers, but to the principles and arguments upon which they are built. The view of this effect makes it necessary for a judge to look beyond the case before him; and, beside the attention he owes to the truth and justice of the cause between the parties, to reflect whether the principles, and maxims, and reasoning

which he adopts and authorizes, can be applied with safety to all cases which admit of a comparison with the present. The decision of the cause, were the effects of the decision to stop there, might be easy; but the consequence of establishing the principle which such a decision assumes, may be difficult, though of the utmost importance, to be foreseen and regulated.

Finally; after all the certainty and rest that can be given to points of law, either by the interposition of the legislature or the authority of precedents, one principal source of disputation, and into which indeed the greater part of legal controversies may be resolved, will remain still, namely, "the competition of opposite analogies." When a point of law has been once adjudged, neither that question nor any which completely, and in all its circumstances, corresponds with *that*, can be brought a second time into dispute: but questions arise, which resemble this only indirectly and in part, in certain views and circumstances, and which may seem to bear an equal or a greater affinity to other adjudged cases; questions which can be brought within any fixed rule only by analogy, and which hold a relation by analogy to different rules. It is by the urging of the different analogies that the contention of the bar is carried on; and it is in the comparison, adjustment and reconciliation, of them with one another; in the discerning of such distinctions; and in the framing of such a determination, as may either save the various rules alleged in the cause, or, if that be impossible, may give up the weaker analogy to the stronger; that the sagacity and wisdom of the court are seen and exercised. Amongst a thousand instances of this, we may cite one of general notoriety, in the contest that has lately been agitated concerning literary property. The personal industry which an author expends upon the composition of his work, bears so near a resemblance to that by which every other kind of property is earned, or deserved, or acquired; or rather there exists such a correspondency between what is created by the study of a man's mind, and the production of his labour in any other way of applying it, that he seems entitled to the same exclusive, assignable, and perpetual, right in both; and that right to the same protection of law. This was the analogy contended for on one side. On the other hand, a book, as to the author's right in it, appears similar to an invention of art, as a machine, an engine, a medicine: and since the law permits these to be copied, or imitated, except where an exclusive use or sale is reserved to the inventor by patent, the same liberty should be allowed in the publication and sale of books. This was the analogy maintained by the advocates of an open trade. And the competition of these opposite analogies constituted the difficulty of the case, as far as the same was argued, or adjudged, upon principles of common law.—One example may serve to illustrate our meaning: but whoever takes up a volume of Reports, will find most of the arguments it contains, capable of the same analysis; although the analogies, it must be confessed, are sometimes so entangled as not to be easily unravelled, or even perceived.

Doubtful and obscure points of law are not however nearly so numerous as they are apprehended to be. Out of the multitude of causes which, in the course of each year, are brought to trial in the

metropolis, or upon the circuits, there are few in which any point is reserved for the judgment of superior courts. Yet these few contain all the doubts with which the law is chargeable: for as to the rest, the uncertainty as hath been shewn above, is not in the law, but in the means of human information.

THERE are two peculiarities in the judicial constitution of this country, which do not carry with them that evidence of their propriety which recommends almost every other part of the system. The first of these is the rule which requires that juries be *unanimous* in their verdicts. To expect that twelve men, taken by lot out of a promiscuous multitude, should agree in their opinion upon points confessedly dubious, and upon which oftentimes the wisest judgments might be holden in suspense: or to suppose that any real *unanimity* or change of opinion, in the dissenting jurors, could be procured by confining them until they all consented to the same verdict; bespeaks more of the conceit of a barbarous age, than of the policy which could dictate such an institution as that of juries. Nevertheless, the effects of this rule are not so detrimental, as the rule itself is unreasonable;—in criminal prosecutions, it operates considerably in favour of the prisoner: for if a juror find it necessary to surrender to the obstinacy of others, he will much more readily resign his opinion on the side of mercy than of condemnation: in civil suits, it adds weight to the direction of the judge; for when a conference with one another does not seem likely to produce, in the jury, the agreement that is necessary, they will naturally close their disputes by a common submission to the opinion delivered from the bench. However, there seems to be less of the concurrence of separate judgments in the same conclusion, consequently less assurance that the conclusion is founded in reasons of apparent truth and justice, than if the decision were left to a plurality, or to some certain majority, of voices.

The second circumstance in our constitution, which, however it may succeed in practice, does not seem to have been suggested by any intelligible fitness in the nature of the thing, is the choice that is made of the *House of Lords* as a court of appeal from every civil court of judicature in the kingdom; and the last also and highest appeal to which the subject can resort. There appears to be nothing in the constitution of that assembly: in the education, habits, character, or professions, of the members who compose it; in the mode of their appointment, or the right by which they succeed to their places in it; that should qualify them for this arduous office; except perhaps, that the elevation of their rank and fortune affords a security against the offer and influence of small bribes. Officers of the army and navy, courtiers, ecclesiastics; young men who have just attained the age of twenty-one, and who have passed their youth in the dissipation and pursuits which commonly accompany the possession or inheritance of great fortunes, country gentlemen, occupied in the management of their estates, or in the care of their domestic concerns and family interests; the greater part of that assembly born to their

station, that is, placed in it by chance; most of the rest advanced to the peerage for services, and from motives, utterly unconnected with legal erudition:—these men compose the tribunal, to which the constitution intrusts the interpretation of her laws, and the ultimate decision of every dispute between her subjects. These are the men assigned to review judgments of law, pronounced by sages of the profession, who have spent their lives in the study and practice of the jurisprudence of their country. Such is the order which our ancestors have established. The effect only proves the truth of this maxim;—"That when a single institution is extremely dissonant from other parts of the system to which it belongs, it will always find some way of reconciling itself to the analogy which governs and pervades the rest." By constantly placing in the House of Lords some of the most eminent and experienced lawyers in the kingdom; by calling to their aid the advice of the judges, when any abstract question of law awaits their determination, by the almost implicit and undisputed deference, which the uninformed part of the house find it necessary to pay to the learning of their colleagues; the appeal to the House of Lords becomes in fact an appeal to the collected wisdom of our supreme courts of justice; receiving indeed solemnity, but little perhaps of direction, from the presence of the assembly in which it is heard and determined.

These, however, even if real, are minute imperfections. A politician who should sit down to delineate a plan for the dispensation of public justice, guarded against all access to influence and corruption, and bringing together the separate advantages of knowledge and impartiality, would find, when he had done, that he had been transcribing the judicial constitution of England. And it may teach the most discontented amongst us to acquiesce in the government of his country, to reflect, that the pure, and wise, and equal, administration of the laws, forms the first end and blessing of social union; and that this blessing is enjoyed by him in a perfection, which he will seek in vain in any other nation of the world.

CHAPTER IX.

Of Crimes and Punishments.

THE proper end of human punishment is not the satisfaction of justice, but the prevention of crimes. By the satisfaction of justice, I mean the retribution of so much pain for so much guilt; which is the dispensation we expect at the hand of God, and which we are accustomed to consider as the order of things that perfect justice dictates and requires. In what sense, or whether with truth in any sense, justice may be said to *demand* the punishment of offenders, I do not now inquire: but I assert, that this demand is not the motive or occasion of human punishment. What would it be to the magistrate that offences went altogether unpunished, if the impunity to the offenders were followed by no danger or prejudice of the commonwealth? The fear lest the escape of the criminal should encourage him, or

others by his example, to repeat the same crime, or to commit different crimes, is the sole consideration which authorizes the infliction of punishment by human laws. Now that, whatever it be, which is the cause and end of the punishment, ought undoubtedly to regulate the measure of its severity. But this cause appears to be founded, not in the guilt of the offender, but in the necessity of preventing the repetition of the offence: and hence results the reason, that crimes are not by any government punished in proportion to their guilt, nor in all cases ought to be so, but in proportion to the difficulty and the necessity of preventing them. Thus the stealing of goods privately out of a shop, may not, in its moral quality, be more criminal than the stealing of them out of a house: yet being equally necessary, and more difficult to be prevented, the law, in certain circumstances, denounces against it a severer punishment. The crime must be prevented by some means or other; and consequently, whatever means appear necessary to this end, whether they be proportionable to the guilt of the criminal or not, are adopted rightly, because they are adopted upon the principle which alone justifies the infliction of punishment at all. From the same consideration it also follows, that punishment ought not to be employed, much less rendered severe, when the crime can be prevented by any other means. Punishment is an evil to which the magistrate resorts only from its being necessary to the prevention of a greater. This necessity does not exist, when the end may be attained, that is, when the public may be defended from the effects of the crime, by any other expedient. The sanguinary laws which have been made against counterfeiting or diminishing the gold coin of the kingdom might be just, until the method of detecting the fraud, by weighing the money, was introduced into general usage. Since that precaution was practised, these laws have slept; and an execution under them at this day would be deemed a measure of unjustifiable severity. The same principle accounts for a circumstance which has been often censured as an absurdity in the penal laws of this, and of most modern nations, namely, that breaches of trust are either not punished at all, or punished with less rigour than other frauds.—Wherefore is it, some have asked, that a violation of confidence, which increases the guilt, should mitigate the penalty?—This lenity, or rather forbearance of the laws, is founded on the most reasonable distinction. A due circumspection in the choice of the persons whom they trust; caution in limiting the extent of that trust: or the requiring of sufficient security for the faithful discharge of it: will commonly guard men from injuries of this description; and the law will not interpose its sanctions to protect negligence and credulity, or to supply the place of domestic care and prudence. To be convinced that the law proceeds entirely upon this consideration, we have only to observe, that where the confidence is unavoidable,—where no practicable vigilance could watch the offender, as in the case of theft committed by a servant in the shop or dwelling-house of his master, or upon property to which he must necessarily have access,—the sentence of the law is not less severe, and its execution commonly more certain and rigorous, than if no trust at all had intervened.

It is in pursuance of the same principle, which pervades indeed the

whole system of penal jurisprudence, that the facility with which any species of crimes is perpetrated has been generally deemed a reason for aggravating the punishment. Thus, sheep-stealing, horse-stealing, the stealing of cloth from tenters or bleaching-grounds, by our laws, subject the offenders to sentence of death: not that these crimes are in their nature more heinous than many simple felonies which are punished by imprisonment or transportation, but because the property, being more exposed, requires the terror of capital punishment to protect it. This severity would be absurd and unjust, if the guilt of the offender were the immediate cause and measure of the punishment; but it is a consistent and regular consequence of the supposition, that the right of punishment results from the necessity of preventing the crime: for if this be the end proposed, the severity of the punishment must be increased in proportion to the expediency and the difficulty of attaining this end; that is, in a proportion compounded of the mischief of the crime, and of the ease with which it is executed. The difficulty of discovery is a circumstance to be included in the same consideration. It constitutes indeed, with respect to the crime, the facility of which we speak. By how much therefore the detection of an offender is more rare and uncertain, by so much the more severe must be the punishment when he is detected. Thus the writing of incendiary letters, though in itself a pernicious and alarming injury, calls for a more condign and exemplary punishment, by the very obscurity with which the crime is committed.

From the justice of God, we are taught to look for a gradation of punishment exactly proportioned to the guilt of the offender; when therefore, in assigning the degrees of human punishment, we introduce considerations distinct from that guilt, and a proportion so varied by external circumstances, that equal crimes frequently undergo unequal punishments, or the less crime the greater; it is natural to demand the reason why a different measure of punishment should be expected from God, and observed by man; why that rule, which befits the absolute and perfect justice of the Deity, should not be the rule which ought to be pursued and imitated by human laws. The solution of this difficulty must be sought for in those peculiar attributes of the Divine nature, which distinguish the dispensations of Supreme Wisdom from the proceedings of human judicature. A being whose knowledge penetrates every concealment, from the operation of whose will no art or flight can escape, and in whose hands punishment is sure; such a Being may conduct the moral government of his creation, in the best and wisest manner, by pronouncing a law that every crime shall finally receive a punishment proportioned to the guilt which it contains, abstracted from any foreign consideration whatever: and may testify his veracity to the spectators of his judgments, by carrying this law into strict execution. But when the care of the public safety is intrusted to men, whose authority over their fellow-creatures is limited by defects of power and knowledge; from whose utmost vigilance and sagacity the greatest offenders often lie hid; whose wisest precautions and speediest pursuit may be eluded by artifice or concealment; a different necessity, a new rule of proceeding, results from the very imperfection of their faculties. In their hands the uncertainty of punishment must be compensated by the severity. The ease with which crimes are committed or concealed, must be counteracted by additional penalties and increased

terrors. The very end for which human government is established requires that its regulations be adapted to the suppression of crimes. This end, whatever it may do in the plans of Infinite Wisdom, does not, in the designation of temporal penalties, alway coincide with the proportionate punishment of guilt.

There are two methods of administering penal justice.

The first method assigns capital punishment to few offences, and inflicts it invariably.

The second method assigns capital punishment to many kinds of offences, but inflicts it only upon a few examples of each kind.

The latter of which two methods has been long adopted in this country, where, of those who receive sentence of death, scarcely one in ten is executed. And the preference of this to the former method seems to be founded in the consideration, that the selection of proper objects for capital punishment principally depends upon circumstances, which, however easy to perceive in each particular case after the crime is committed, it is impossible to enumerate or define beforehand; or to ascertain however with that exactness which is requisite in legal descriptions. Hence, although it be necessary to fix by precise rules of law the boundary on one side, that is, the limit to which the punishment may be extended; and also that nothing less than the authority of the whole legislation be suffered to determine that boundary, and assign these rules; yet the mitigation of punishment, the exercise of lenity, may without danger be intrusted to the executive magistrate, whose discretion will operate upon those numerous, unforeseen, mutable, and indefinite circumstances, both of the crime and the criminal, which constitute or qualify the malignity of each offence. Without the power of relaxation lodged in a living authority, either some offenders would escape capital punishment, whom the public safety required to suffer; or some would undergo this punishment, where it was neither deserved nor necessary. For if judgment of death were reserved for one or two species of crimes only (which would probably be the case if that judgment was intended to be executed without exception), crimes might occur of the most dangerous example, and accompanied with circumstance of heinous aggravation, which did not fall within *any* description of offences that the laws had made capital, and which consequently could not receive the punishment their own malignity and the public safety required. What is worse, it would be known beforehand, that such crimes might be committed without danger to the offender's life. On the other hand, if, to reach these possible cases, the whole class of offences to which they belong be subjected to pains of death, and no power of remitting this severity remain any where, the execution of the laws will become more sanguinary than the public compassion would endure, or than is necessary to the general security.

The law of England is constructed upon a different and a better policy. By the number of statutes creating capital offences, it sweeps into the net every crime which, under any possible circumstances, may merit the punishment of death; but when the execution of this sentence comes to be deliberated upon, a small proportion of each class are singled out, the general character, or the peculiar aggravations, of whose crimes, render them fit examples of public justice. By this expedient few actually suffer death, whilst the dread and danger of it hang over

the crimes of many. The tenderness of the law cannot be taken advantage of. The life of the subject is spared as far as the necessity of restraint and intimidation permits; yet no one will adventure upon the commission of any enormous crime, from a knowledge that the laws have not provided for its punishment. The wisdom and humanity of this design furnish a just excuse for the multiplicity of capital offences, which the laws of England are accused of creating beyond those of other countries. The charge of cruelty is answered by observing, that these laws were never meant to be carried into indiscriminate execution; that the legislature, when it establishes its last and highest sanctions, trusts to the benignity of the crown to relax their severity as often as circumstances appear to palliate the offence, or even as often as those circumstances of aggravation are wanting, which rendered this rigorous interposition necessary. Upon this plan, it is enough to vindicate the lenity of the laws, that *some* instances are to be found in each class of capital crimes, which require the restraint of capital punishment, and that this restraint could not be applied without subjecting the whole class to the same condemnation.

There is however one species of crimes, the making of which capital can hardly, I think, be defended even upon the comprehensive principle just now stated;—I mean that of privately stealing from the person. As every degree of force is excluded by the description of the crime, it will be difficult to assign an example, where either the amount or circumstance of the theft place it upon a level with those dangerous attempts to which the punishment of death should be confined. It will be still more difficult to shew, that, without gross and culpable negligence on the part of the sufferer, such examples can ever become so frequent, as to make it necessary to constitute a class of capital offences, of very wide and large extent.

The prerogative of pardon is properly reserved to the chief magistrate. The power of suspending the laws is a privilege of too high a nature to be committed to many hands, or to those of any inferior officer in the state. The king can also best collect the advice by which his resolutions shall be governed; and is at the same time removed at the greatest distance from the influence of private motives. But let this power be deposited where it will, the exercise of it ought to be regarded, not as a favour to be yielded to solicitation, granted to friendship, or, least of all, to be made subservient to the conciliating or gratifying of political attachments, but as a judicial act; as a deliberation to be conducted with the same character of impartiality, with the same exact and diligent attention to the proper merits and circumstances of the case, as that which the judge upon the bench was expected to maintain and shew in the trial of the prisoner's guilt. The questions, whether the prisoner be guilty, and whether, being guilty, he ought to be executed, are equally questions of public justice. The adjudication of the latter question is as much a function of magistracy, as the trial of the former. The public welfare is interested in both. The conviction of an offender should depend upon nothing but the proof of his guilt; nor the execution of the sentence upon any thing beside the quality and circumstances of his crime. It is necessary to the good order of society, and to the reputation and authority of government, that this be known and believed to be the case in each part

of the proceeding. Which reflections shew that the admission of extrinsic or oblique considerations, in the dispensing the power of pardon, is a crime, in the authors and advisers of such unmerited partiality, of the same nature with that of corruption in a judge.

Aggravations which ought to guide the magistrate in the selection of objects of condign punishment, are principally these three,—repetition, cruelty, combination. The first two, it is manifest, add to every reason upon which the justice or the necessity of rigorous measures can be founded; and with respect to the last circumstance, it may be observed, that when thieves and robbers are once collected into gangs, their violence becomes more formidable, the confederates more desperate, and the difficulty of defending the public against their depredations much greater, than in the case of solitary adventurers. Which several considerations compose a distinction that is properly adverted to, in deciding upon the fate of convicted malefactors.

In crimes, however, which are perpetrated by a multitude, or by a gang, it is proper to separate, in the punishment, the ringleader from his followers, the principal from his accomplices, and even the person who struck the blow, broke the lock, or first entered the house, from those who joined him in the felony; not so much on account of any distinction in the guilt of the offenders, as for the sake of casting an obstacle in the way of such confederacies, by rendering it difficult for the confederates to settle who shall begin the attack, or to find a man amongst their number willing to expose himself to greater danger than his associates. This is another instance in which the punishment which expediency directs, does not pursue the exact proportion of the crime.

Injuries effected by terror and violence, are those which it is the first and chief concern of legal government to repress; because their extent is unlimited, because no private precaution can protect the subject against them; because they endanger life and safety, as well as property: and lastly, because they render the condition of society wretched, by a sense of personal insecurity. These reasons do not apply to frauds which circumspection may prevent; which must wait for opportunity; which can proceed only to certain limits; and by the apprehension of which, although the business of life be incommoded, life itself is not made miserable. The appearance of this distinction has led some humane writers to express a wish, that capital punishments might be confined to crimes of violence.

In estimating the comparative malignancy of crimes of violence, regard is to be had, not only to the proper and intended mischief of the crime, but to the fright occasioned by the attack, to the general alarm excited by it in others, and to the consequences which may attend future attempts of the same kind. Thus, in affixing the punishing of burglary, or of breaking into dwelling-houses by night, we are to consider not only the peril to which the most valuable property is exposed by this crime, and which may be called the direct mischief of it, but the danger also of murder in case of resistance, or for the sake of preventing discovery; and the universal dread with which the silent and defenceless hours of rest and sleep must be disturbed, were attempts of this sort to become frequent; and which dread alone, even without the mischief which is the object of it, is not only a public evil, but al-

most of all evils the most insupportable. These circumstances place a difference between the breaking into a dwelling-house by day, and by night; which difference obtains in the punishment of the offence by the law of Moses, and is probably to be found in the judicial codes of most countries, from the earliest ages to the present.

Of frauds, or of injuries which are effected without force, the most noxious kinds are,—forgeries, counterfeiting or diminishing of the coin, and the stealing of letters in the course of their conveyance; inasmuch as these practices tend to deprive the public of accommodations, which not only improve the conveniences of social life, but are essential to the prosperity, and even the existence, of commerce. Of these crimes it may be said, that although they seem to affect property alone, the mischief of their operation does not terminate there. For let it be supposed, that the remissness or lenity of the laws should, in any country suffer offences of this sort to grow into such a frequency, as to render the use of money, the circulation of bills, or the public conveyance of letters, no longer safe or practicable; what would follow, but that every species of trade and of activity must decline under these discouragements; the sources of subsistence fail, by which the inhabitants of the country are supported; the country itself, where the intercourse of civil life was so endangered and defective, be deserted; and that, beside the distress and poverty which the loss of employment would produce to the industrious and valuable part of the existing community, a rapid depopulation must take place, each generation becoming less numerous than the last; till solitude and barrenness overspread the land; until a desolation similar to what obtains in many countries in Asia, which were once the most civilized and frequented parts of the world, succeed in the place of crowded cities, of cultivated fields, of happy and well-peopled regions? When therefore we carry forward our views to the more distant, but not less certain, consequence of these crimes, we perceive that though no living creature be destroyed by them, yet human life is diminished; that an offence, the particular consequence of which deprives only an individual of a small portion of his property, and which even in its general tendency seems to do nothing more than obstruct the enjoyment of certain public conveniences, may nevertheless, by its ultimate effects, conclude in the laying waste of human existence. This observation will enable those who regard the divine rule of "life for life, and blood for blood," as the only authorized and justifiable measure of capital punishment, to perceive with respect to the effects and quality of the actions, a greater resemblance than they suppose to exist between certain atrocious frauds, and those crimes which attack personal safety.

In the case of forgeries there appears a substantial difference between the forging of bills of exchange, or of securities which are circulated, and of which, in trading communities, the circulation and currency are found to serve and facilitate valuable purposes of commerce; and the forging of bonds, leases, mortgages, or of instruments which are not commonly transferred from one hand to another: because, in the former case, credit is necessarily given to the signature, and without that credit the negotiation of such property could not be carried on, nor the public utility, sought from it, be attained: in the other

case, all possibility of deceit might be precluded, by a direct communication between the parties, or by due care in the choice of their agents with little interruption to business, and without destroying, or much encumbering, the uses for which these instruments are calculated. This distinction I apprehend to be not only real, but precise enough to afford a line of division between forgeries, which, as the law now stands, are almost universally capital, and punished with undistinguishing severity.

Perjury is another crime of the same class and magnitude. And, when we consider what reliance is necessarily placed upon oaths; that all judicial decisions proceed upon testimony; that consequently there is not a right that a man possesses, of which false witnesses may not deprive him; that reputation, property, and life itself, lie open to the attempts of perjury; that it may often be committed without a possibility of contradiction or discovery; that the success and prevalency of this vice tend to introduce the most grievous and fatal injustice into the administration of human affairs, or such a distrust of testimony as must create universal embarrassment and confusion; when we reflect upon these mischiefs, we shall be brought, probably, to agree with the opinion of those who contend that perjury, in its punishment, especially that which is attempted in solemn evidence, and in the face of a court of justice, should be placed upon a level with the most flagitious frauds.

The obtaining of money by secret threats, whether we regard the difficulty with which the crime is traced out, the odious imputations to which it may lead, or the profligate conspiracies that are sometimes formed to carry it into execution, deserves to be reckoned amongst the worst species of robbery.

The frequency of capital executions in this country, owes its necessity to three causes;—much liberty, great cities, and the want of a punishment short of death, possessing a sufficient degree of terror. And if the taking away of the life of malefactors be more rare in other countries than in ours, the reason will be found in some difference in these articles. The liberties of a free people, and still more the jealousy with which these liberties are watched, and by which they are preserved, permit not those precautions and restraints, that inspection, scrutiny, and control, which are exercised with success in arbitrary governments. For example, neither the spirit of the laws, nor of the people, will suffer the detention or confinement of suspected persons, without proofs of their guilt, which it is often impossible to obtain: nor will they allow that masters of families be obliged to record and render up a description of the strangers or inmates whom they entertain; nor that an account be demanded, at the pleasure of the magistrate, of each man's time, employment, and means of subsistence; nor securities to be required when these accounts appear unsatisfactory or dubious; nor men to be apprehended upon the mere suggestion of idleness or vagrancy; nor to be confined to certain districts; nor the inhabitants of each district to be made responsible for one another's behaviour; nor passports to be exacted from all persons entering or leaving the kingdom: least of all will they tolerate the appearance of an armed force, or of military law: or suffer the streets and public

roads to be guarded and patrolled by soldiers: or, lastly, intrust the police with such discretionary powers, as may make sure of the guilty, however they involve the innocent. These expedients, although arbitrary and rigorous, are many of them effectual; and in proportion as they render the commission or concealment of crimes more difficult, they subtract from the necessity of severe punishment.—*Great cities* multiply crimes, by presenting easier opportunities, and more incentives to libertinism, which in low life is commonly the introductory stage to other enormities; by collecting thieves and robbers into the same neighbourhood, which enables them to form communications and confederacies, that increase their art and courage, as well as strength and wickedness; but principally by the refuge they afford to villany, in the means of concealment, and of subsisting in secrecy, which crowded towns supply to men of every description. These temptations and facilities can only be counteracted by adding to the number of capital punishments.—But a *third* cause, which increases the frequency of capital executions in England, is, a defect of the laws, in not being provided with any other punishment than that of death, sufficiently terrible to keep offenders in awe. Transportation, which is the sentence second in the order of severity, appears to me to answer the purpose of example very imperfectly; not only because exile is in reality a slight punishment to those who have neither property, nor friends, nor reputation, nor regular means of subsistence, at home; and because their situation becomes little worse by their crime, than it was before they committed it; but because the punishment, whatever it be, is unobserved and unknown. A transported convict may suffer under his sentence, but his sufferings are removed from the view of his countrymen; his misery is unseen; his condition strikes no terror into the minds of those for whose warning and admonition it was intended.

This chasm in the scale of punishment produces also two farther imperfections in the administration of penal justice:—the first is, that the same punishment is extended to crimes of very different character and malignancy; the second, that punishments separated by a great interval, are assigned to crimes hardly distinguishable in their guilt and mischief.

The end of punishment is twofold;—*amendment* and *example*. In the first of these, the *reformation* of criminals, little has ever been effected, and little, I fear, is practicable. From every species of punishment that has hitherto been devised, from imprisonment and exile, from pain and infamy, malefactors return more hardened in their crimes, and more instructed. If there be any thing that shakes the soul of a confirmed villain, it is the expectation of approaching death. The horrors of this situation may cause such a wrench in the mental organs, as to give them a holding turn: and I think it probable, that many of those who are executed, would, if they were delivered at the point of death, retain such a remembrance of their sensations, as might preserve them, unless urged by extreme want, from relapsing into their former crimes. But this is an experiment that, from its nature, cannot be repeated often.

Of the *reforming* punishments which have not yet been tried, none promises so much success as that of *solitary* imprisonment, or the

confinement of criminals in separate apartments. This improvement augments the terror of the punishment; secludes the criminal from the society of his fellow-prisoners, in which society the worse are sure to corrupt the better; weans him from the knowledge of his companions, and from the love of that turbulent, precarious life, in which his vices had engaged him; is calculated to raise up in him reflections on the folly of his choice, and to dispose his mind to such bitter and continued penitence, as may produce a lasting alteration in the principles of his conduct.

As aversion to labour is the cause from which half of the vices of low life deduce their origin and continuance, punishments ought to be contrived with a view to the conquering of this disposition. Two opposite expedients have been recommended for this purpose; the one, solitary confinement with hard labour; the other, solitary confinement with nothing to do. Both expedients seek the same end; —to reconcile the idle to a life of industry. The former hopes to effect this by making labour habitual; the latter by making idleness insupportable: and the preference of one method to the other depends upon the question whether a man is more likely to betake himself of his own accord, to work, who has been accustomed to employment, or who has been distressed by the want of it. When jails are once provided for the *separate* confinement of prisoners, which both proposals require, the choice between them may soon be determined by experience. If labour be exacted, I would leave the whole, or a portion, of the earnings to the prisoner's use, and I would debar him from any other provision or supply; that his subsistence, however coarse and penurious, may be proportioned to his diligence, and that he may taste the advantage of industry together with the toil. I would go farther; I would measure the confinement, not by the duration of time, but by quantity of work, in order both to excite industry, and to render it more voluntary. But the principal difficulty remains still; namely, how to dispose of criminals after their enlargement. By a rule of life, which is perhaps too invariably and indiscriminately adhered to, no one will receive a man or woman out of a jail, into any service or employment whatever. This is the common misfortune of public punishments, that they preclude the offender from all honest means of future support.* It seems incumbent upon the state to secure a maintenance to those who are willing to work for it; and yet it is absolutely necessary to divide criminals as far asunder from one another as possible. Whether male prisoners might not, after the term of their confinement was expired, be distributed in the country, detained within certain limits, and employed upon the public roads; and females be remitted to the overseers of country parishes, to be there furnished with dwellings, and with the materials and implements of occupation: whether by these, or by what other methods, it may be possible to effect the two purposes of *employment* and *dispersion*; well merits the attention of all who are anxious to perfect the internal regulation of their country.

* Until this inconvenience be remedied, small offences had perhaps better go unpunished; I do not mean that the law should exempt them from punishment, but that private persons should be tender in prosecuting them.

Torture is applied either to obtain confessions of guilt, or to exasperate or prolong the pains of death. No bodily punishment, however excruciating or long-continued, receives the name of torture, unless it be designed to kill the criminal by a more lingering death; or to extort from him the discovery of some secret, which is supposed to lie concealed in his breast. *The question by torture* appears to be equivocal in its effects: for since extremity of pain, and not any consciousness of remorse in the mind, produces those effects, an innocent man may sink under the torment, as well as he who is guilty. The latter has as much to fear from yielding, as the former. The instant and almost irresistible desire of relief may draw from one sufferer false accusations of himself or others, as it may sometimes extract the truth out of another. This ambiguity renders the use of torture, as a means of procuring information in criminal proceedings, liable to the risk of grievous and irreparable injustice. For which reason, though recommended by ancient and general example, it has been properly exploded from the mild and cautious system of penal jurisprudence established in this country.

Barbarous spectacles of human agony are justly found fault with, as tending to harden and deprave the public feelings, and to destroy that sympathy with which the sufferings of our fellow-creatures ought always to be seen: or, if no effect of this kind follow from them, they counteract in some measure their own design, by sinking men's abhorrence of the crime in their commiseration of the criminal. But if a mode of execution could be devised, which would augment the horror of the punishment, without offending or impairing the public sensibility by cruel or unseemly exhibitions of death, it might add something to the efficacy of the example: and, by being reserved for a few atrocious crimes, might also enlarge the scale of punishment; an addition to which seems wanting: for, as the matter remains at present, you hang a malefactor for a simple robbery, and can do no more to the villain who has poisoned his father. Somewhat of the sort we have been describing, was the proposal, not long since suggested, of casting murderers into a den of wild beasts, where they would perish in a manner dreadful to the imagination, yet concealed from view.

Infamous punishments are mismanaged in this country, with respect both to the crimes and the criminals. In the first place, they ought to be confined to offences which are holden in undisputed and universal detestation. To condemn to the pillory the author or editor of a libel against the state, who has rendered himself the favourite of a party, if not of the people, by the very act for which he stands there, is to gratify the offender, and to expose the laws to mockery and insult. In the second place; the delinquents who receive this sentence, are for the most part such as have long ceased either to value reputation, or to fear shame; of whose happiness, and of whose enjoyments, character makes no part. Thus the low ministers of libertinism, the keepers of bawdy or disorderly houses, are threatened in vain with a punishment that affects a sense which they have not; that applies solely to the imagination, to the virtue, to the pride of human nature. The pillory, or any other infamous distinction, might be employed rightly, and with effect, in the punishment of some

offences of higher life; as of frauds and peculation in office; of collusions and connivances, by which the public treasury is defrauded; of breaches of trust; of perjury, and subornation of perjury; of the clandestine and forbidden sale of places; of flagrant abuses of authority, or neglect of duty; and, lastly, of corruption in the exercise of confidential or judicial offices. In all of which, the more elevated was the station of the criminal, the more signal and conspicuous would be the triumph of justice.

The *certainty* of punishment is of more consequence than the severity. Criminals do not so much flatter themselves with the lenity of the sentence, as with the hope of escaping. They are not so apt to compare what they gain by the crime, with what they may suffer from the punishment, as to encourage themselves with the chance of concealment or flight. For which reason, a vigilant magistracy, an accurate police, a proper distribution of force and intelligence, together with due rewards for the discovery and apprehension of malefactors, and an undeviating impartiality in carrying the laws into execution, contribute more to the restraint and suppression of crimes than any violent exacerbations of punishment. And, for the same reason, of all contrivances directed to this end, those perhaps are most effectual which facilitate the conviction of criminals. The offence of counterfeiting the coin could not be checked by all the terrors and the utmost severity of law, whilst the act of coining was necessary to be established by specific proof. The statute which made possession of the implements of coining capital, that is, which constituted that possession complete evidence of the offender's guilt, was the first thing that gave force and efficacy to the denunciations of law upon this subject. The statute of James the First, relative to the murder of bastard children, which ordains that the concealment of the birth should be deemed incontestible proof of the charge, though a harsh law, was, in like manner with the former, well calculated to put a stop to the crime.

It is upon the principle of this observation, that I apprehend much harm to have been done to the community, by the over-strained scrupulousness, or weak timidity, of juries, which demands often such proof of a prisoner's guilt, as the nature and secrecy of his crime scarce possibly admit of; and which holds it the part of a safe conscience not to condemn any man, whilst there exists the minutest possibility of his innocence. Any story they may happen to have heard or read, whether real or feigned, in which courts of justice have been misled by presumptions of guilt, is enough, in their minds, to found an acquittal upon, where positive proof is wanting. I do not mean that juries should indulge conjectures, should magnify suspicions into proofs, or even that they should weigh probabilities in *gold scales:* but when the preponderation of evidence is so manifest as to persuade every private understanding of the prisoner's guilt; when it furnishes the degree of credibility upon which men decide and act in all other doubts, and which experience hath shewn that they may decide and act upon with sufficient safety; to reject such proof, from an insinuation of uncertainty that belongs to all human affairs, and from a general dread lest the charge of innocent blood should lie at their doors, is a conduct, which, however natural to a

mind studious of its own quiet, is authorized by no considerations of rectitude or utility. It counteracts the care, and damps the activity, of government; it holds out public encouragement to villany, by confessing the impossibility of bringing villains to justice; and that species of encouragement which, as hath been just now observed, the minds of such men are most apt to entertain and dwell upon.

There are two popular maxims, which seem to have a considerable influence in producing the injudicious acquittals of which we complain. One is:—"That circumstantial evidence falls short of positive proof." This assertion, in the unqualified sense in which it is applied, is not true. A concurrence of well-authenticated circumstances composes a stronger ground of assurance than positive testimony, unconfirmed by circumstances, usually affords. Circumstances cannot lie. The conclusion also which results from them, though deduced by only probable inference, is commonly more to be relied upon than the veracity of an unsupported solitary witness. The danger of being deceived is less, the actual instances of deception are fewer, in the one case than the other. What is called positive proof in criminal matters, as where a man swears to the person of the prisoner, and that he actually saw him commit the crime with which he is charged, may be founded in the mistake or perjury of a single witness. Such mistakes, and such perjuries, are not without many examples. Whereas to impose upon a court of justice a chain of *circumstantial* evidence in support of a fabricated accusation, requires such a number of false witnesses as seldom meet together; a union also of skill and wickedness which is still more rare; and, after all, this species of proof lies much more open to discussion, and is more likely, if false, to be contradicted, or to betray itself by some unforeseen inconsistency, than that direct proof, which being confined within the knowledge of a single person, which, appealing to, or standing connected with, no external or collateral circumstances, is incapable, by its very simplicity, of being confronted with opposite probabilities.

The other maxim which deserves a similar examination is this:—"That it is better that ten guilty persons escape, than that one innocent man should suffer." If by saying it is better, be meant that it is more for the public advantage, the proposition, I think, cannot be maintained. The security of civil life, which is essential to the value and the enjoyment of every blessing it contains, and the interruption of which is followed by universal misery and confusion, is protected chiefly by the dread of punishment. The misfortune of an individual (for such may the sufferings, or even the death, of an innocent person be called, when they are occasioned by no evil intention) cannot be placed in competition with this object. I do not contend that the life or safety of the meanest subject ought, in any case, to be knowingly sacrificed: no principle of judicature, no end of punishment, can ever require *that*. But when certain rules of adjudication must be pursued, when certain degrees of credibility must be accepted, in order to reach the crimes with which the public are infested; courts of justice should not be deterred from the application of these rules, by *every* suspicion of danger, or by the mere possibility of confounding the innocent with the guilty. They ought rather to reflect, that

he who falls by a mistaken sentence, may be considered as falling for his country; whilst he suffers under the operation of those rules, by the general effect and tendency of which the welfare of the community is maintained and upholden.

CHAPTER X.

Of Religious Establishments, and of Toleration.

"A RELIGIOUS establishment is no part of Christianity; it is only the means of inculcating it." Amongst the Jews, the rights and offices, the order, family, and succession, of the priesthood, were marked out by the authority which declared the law itself. These, therefore, were *parts* of the Jewish religion, as well as the means of transmitting it. Not so with the new institution. It cannot be proved that any form of church-government was laid down in the Christian, as it had been in the Jewish Scriptures, with the view of fixing a constitution for succeeding ages; and which constitution, consequently, the disciples of Christianity would every where, and at all times, by the very law of their religion, be obliged to adopt. Certainly, no command for this purpose was delivered by Christ himself: and if it be shewn that the apostles ordained bishops and presbyters amongst their first converts, it must be remembered that deacons also and deaconesses were appointed by them, with functions very dissimilar to any which obtain in the church at present. The truth seems to have been, that such offices were at first erected in the Christian church, as the good order, the instruction, and the exigencies, of the society at that time required, without any intention, at least without any declared design, of regulating the appointment authority, or the distinction, of Christian ministers under future circumstances. This reserve, if we may so call it, in the Christian Legislator, is sufficiently accounted for by two considerations:—First, that no precise constitution could be framed, which would suit with the condition of Christianity in its primitive state, and with that which it was to assume when it should be advanced into a national religion: Secondly, that a particular designation of office or authority amongst the ministers of the new religion, might have so interfered with the arrangements of civil policy, as to have formed, in some countries, a considerable obstacle to the progress and reception of the religion itself.

The authority therefore of a church-establishment is founded in its utility: and whenever, upon this principle, we deliberate concerning the form, propriety, or comparative excellency, of different establishments, the single view under which we ought to consider any of them is, that of "a scheme of instruction;" the single end we ought to propose by them is, "the preservation and communication of religious knowledge." Every other idea, and every other end, that have been mixed with this, as the making of the church an engine, or even an *ally*, of the state; converting it into the means of strengthening or diffusing influence; or regarding it as a support of regal

in opposition to popular forms of government; have served only to debase the institution, and to introduce into it numerous corruptions and abuses.

The notion of a religious establishment comprehends three things; a clergy, or an order of men secluded from other professions to attend upon the offices of religion; a legal provision for the maintenance of the clergy; and the confining of that provision to the teachers of a particular sect of Christianity. If any one of these three things be wanting; if there be no clergy, as amongst the Quakers; or if the clergy have no other provision than what they derive from the voluntary contribution of their hearers; or if the provision which the laws assign to the support of religion be extended to various sects and denominations of Christians; there exists no national religion or established church; according to the sense which these terms are usually made to convey. He, therefore, who would defend ecclesiastical establishments, must shew the separate utility of these three essential parts of their constitution:—

1. The question first in order upon the subject, as well as the most fundamental in its importance, is, whether the knowledge and profession of Christianity can be maintained in a country without a class of men set apart by public authority to the study and teaching of religion, and to the conducting of public worship; and for these purposes secluded from other employments. I add this last circumstance, because in it consists, as I take it, the substances of the controversy. Now it must be remembered, that Christianity is an historical religion, founded in facts which are related to have passed, upon discourses which were holden, and letters which were written, in a remote age, and distant country of the world, as well as under a state of life and manners, and during the prevalency of opinions, customs, and institutions, very unlike any which are found amongst mankind at present. Moreover, this religion, having been first published in the country of Judea, and being built upon the more ancient religion of the Jews, is necessarily and intimately connected with the sacred writings, with the history and polity of that singular people: to which must be added, that the records of both revelations are preserved in languages which have long ceased to be spoken in any part of the world. Books which come down to us from times so remote, and under so many causes of unavoidable obscurity, cannot, it is evident, be understood without study and preparation. The languages must be learned. The various writings which these volumes contain, must be carefully compared with one another, and with themselves. What remains of contemporary authors, or of authors connected with the age, the country, or the subject, of our Scriptures, must be perused and consulted, in order to interpret doubtful forms of speech, and to explain allusions which refer to objects or usages that no longer exist. Above all, the modes of expression, the habits of reasoning and argumentation, which were then in use, and to which the discourses even of inspired teachers were necessarily adapted, must be sufficiently known, and can only be known at all by a due acquaintance with ancient literature. And, lastly, to establish the genuineness and integrity of the canonical Scriptures themselves, a series of testimony, recognising the

notoriety and reception of these books, must be deduced from times near to those of their first publication down the succession of ages through which they have been transmitted to us. The qualifications necessary, for such researches demand, it is confessed, a degree of leisure, and a kind of education, inconsistent with the exercise of any other profession.—But how few are there amongst the clergy, from whom any thing of this sort can be expected! how small a proportion of their number, who seem likely either to augment the fund of sacred literature, or even to collect what is already known!—To this objection it may be replied, that we sow many seeds to raise one flower. In order to produce a *few* capable of improving and continuing the stock of Christian erudition, leisure and opportunity must be afforded to great numbers. Original knowledge of this kind can never be universal; but it is of the utmost importance, and it is enough, that there be, at all times, found *some* qualified for such inquiries, and in whose concurring and independent conclusions upon each subject, the rest of the Christian community may safely confide: whereas, without an order of clergy educated for the purpose, and led to the prosecution of these studies by the habits, the leisure, and the object, of their vocation, it may well be questioned whether the learning itself would not have been lost, by which the records of our faith are interpreted and defended. We contend, therefore, that an order of clergy is necessary, to perpetuate the evidences of revelation and to interpret the obscurity of those ancient writings in which the religion is contained. But beside this, which forms, no doubt, one design of their institution, the more ordinary offices of public teaching, and of conducting public worship, call for qualifications not usually to be met with amidst the employments of civil life. It has been acknowledged by some, who cannot be suspected of making unnecessary concessions in favour of establishments, "to be barely *possible* that a person who was never educated for the office should acquit himself with decency as a public teacher of religion." And that surely must be a very defective policy which trusts to *possibilities* for success, when provision is to be made for regular and general instruction. Little objection to this argument can be drawn from the example of the Quakers, who, it may be said, furnish an experimental proof that the worship and profession of Christianity may be upholden without a separate clergy. These sectaries every where subsist in conjunction with a regular establishment. They have access to the writings, they profit by the labours, of the clergy, in common with other Christians. They participate in that general diffusion of religious knowledge, which the constant teaching of a more regular ministry keeps up in the country; with such aids, and under such circumstances, the defects of a plan may not be much felt, although the plan itself be altogether unfit for general imitation.

2. If then an order of clergy be necessary, if it be necessary also to seclude them from the employments and profits of other professions, it is evident they ought to be enabled to derive a maintenance from their own. Now this maintenance must either depend upon the voluntary contributions of their hearers, or arise from revenues assigned by authority of law. To the scheme of voluntary contribution there exists this insurmountable objection, that few would ultimately

contribute any thing at all. However the zeal of a sect, or the novelty of a change, might support such an experiment for a while, no reliance could be placed upon it as a general and permanent provision. It is at all times a bad constitution, which presents temptations of interest in opposition to the duties of religion; or which makes the offices of religion expensive to those who attend upon them; or which allows pretences of conscience to be an excuse for not sharing in a public burden. If, by declining to frequent religious assemblies, men could save their money, at the same time that they indulged their indolence, and their disinclination to exercises of seriousness and reflection; or if, by dissenting from the national religion, they could be excused from contributing to the support of the ministers of religion; it is to be feared that many would take advantage of the option which was thus imprudently left open to them, and that this liberty might finally operate to the decay of virtue, and an irrecoverable forgetfulness of all religion in the country. Is there not too much reason to fear, that, if it were referred to the discretion of each neighbourhood, whether they would maintain amongst them a teacher of religion or not, many districts would remain unprovided with any; that, with the difficulties which encumber every measure requiring the co-operation of numbers, and where each individual of the number has an interest secretly pleading against the success of the measure itself, associations for the support of Christian worship and instruction would neither be numerous nor long continued? The devout and pious might lament in vain the want or the distance of a religious assembly: they could not form or maintain one, without the concurrence of neighbours who felt neither their zeal nor their liberality.

From the difficulty with which congregations would be established and upheld upon the *voluntary* plan, let us carry our thoughts to the condition of those who are to officiate in them. Preaching, in time, would become a mode of begging. With what sincerity, or with what dignity, can a preacher dispense the truths of Christianity, whose thoughts are perpetually solicited to the reflection how he may increase his subscription? His eloquence, if he possess any, resembles rather the exhibition of a player who is computing the profits of his theatre, than the simplicity of a man, who, feeling himself the awful expectations of religion, is seeking to bring others to such a sense and understanding of their duty as may save their souls. Moreover, a little experience of the disposition of the common people will in every country inform us, that it is one thing to edify them in Christian knowledge, and another to gratify their taste for vehement, impassioned oratory; that he, not only whose success, but whose subsistence, depends upon collecting and pleasing a crowd, must resort to other arts than the acquirement and communication of sober and profitable instruction. For a preacher to be thus at the mercy of his audience: to be obliged to adapt his doctrines to the pleasure of a capricious multitude; to be continually affecting a style and manner neither natural to him, nor agreeable to his judgment; to live in constant bondage to tyrannical and insolent directors; are circumstances so mortifying, not only to the pride of the human heart, but to the virtuous love of independency, that they are rarely submitted

to without a sacrifice of principle, and a depravation of character;—at least it may be pronounced, that a ministry so degraded would soon fall into the lowest hands: for it would be found impossible to engage men of worth and ability in so precarious and humiliating a profession.

If in deference then to these reasons, it be admitted, that a legal provision for the clergy, compulsory upon those who contribute to it, is expedient; the next question will be, whether this provision should be confined to one sect of Christianity, or extended indifferently to all? Now it should be observed, that this question never *can* offer itself where the people are agreed in their religious opinions; and that it never *ought* to arise, where a system may be framed of doctrines and worship wide enough to comprehend their disagreement; and which might satisfy all, by uniting all in the articles of their common faith, and in a mode of divine worship that omits every subject of controversy or offence. Where such a comprehension is practicable, the comprehending religion ought to be made that of the state. But if this be despaired of; if religious opinions exist, not only so various, but so contradictory, as to render it impossible to reconcile them to each other, or to any one confession of faith, rule of discipline, or form of worship; if, consequently, separate congregations and different sects must unavoidably continue in the country: under such circumstances, whether the laws ought to establish one sect in preference to the rest, that is, whether they ought to confer the provision assigned to the maintenance of religion upon the teachers of one system of doctrines alone, becomes a question of necessary discussion and of great importance. And whatever we may determine concerning speculative rights and abstract proprieties, when we set about the framing of an ecclesiastical constitution adapted to real life, and to the actual state of religion in the country, we shall find this question very nearly related to and principally indeed dependant upon another; namely, "In what way, or by whom ought the ministers of religion to be *appointed*?" If the species of patronage be retained to which we are accustomed in this country, and which allows private individuals to nominate teachers of religion for districts and congregations to which they are absolute strangers; without some test proposed to the persons nominated, the utmost discordancy of religious opinions might arise between the several teachers and their respective congregations. A popish patron might appoint a priest to say mass to a congregation of Protestants; and episcopal clergymen be sent to officiate in a parish of Presbyterians; or a Presbyterian divine to inveigh against the errors of popery before an audience of Papists. The requisition then of subscription, or any other test by which the national religion is guarded, may be considered merely as a restriction upon the exercise of private patronage. The laws speak to the private patron thus:—"Of those whom we have previously pronounced to be fitly qualified to teach religion, we allow you to select one; but we do not allow you to decide what religion shall be established in a particular district of the country; for which decision you are no wise fitted by any qualifications which as a private patron, you may happen to possess. If it be necessary

that the point be determined for the inhabitants by any other will than their own, it is surely better that it should be determined by a deliberate resolution of the legislature, than by the casual inclination of an individual, by whom the right is purchased, or to whom it devolves as a mere secular inheritance." Wheresoever, therefore, this constitution of patronage is adopted, a national religion, or the legal preference of one particular religion to all others, must almost necessarily accompany it. But, secondly, let it be supposed that the appointment of the minister of religion was in every parish left to the choice of the parishioners; might not this choice, we ask, be safely exercised without its being limited to the teachers of any particular sect? The effect of such a liberty must be, that a Papist, or a Presbyterian, a Methodist, a Moravian, or an Anabaptist, would successively gain possession of the pulpit, according as a majority of the party happened at each election to prevail. Now, with what violence the conflict would upon every vacancy be renewed; what bitter animosities would be revived, or rather be constantly fed and kept alive in the neighbourhood; with what unconquerable aversion the teacher and his religion would be received by the defeated party; may be foreseen by those who reflect with how much passion every dispute is carried on, in which the name of religion can be made to mix itself; much more where the cause itself is concerned so immediately as it would be in this. Or, thirdly, if the state appoint the ministers of religion, this constitution will differ little from the establishment of a national religion, for the state will, undoubtedly, appoint those, and those alone, whose religious opinions, or rather whose religious denominations, agree with its own; unless it be thought that any thing would be gained to religious liberty by transferring the choice of the national religion from the legislature of the country, to the magistrate who administers the executive government. The only plan which seems to render the legal maintenance of a clergy practicable, without the legal preference of one sect of Christians to others, is that of an experiment which is said to be attempted or designed in some of the new states of North America. The nature of the plan is thus described: —A tax is levied upon the inhabitants for the general support of religion; the collector of the tax goes round with a register in his hand, in which are inserted, at the head of so many distinct columns, the names of the several religious sects that are professed in the country. The person who is called upon for the assessment, as soon as he has paid his quota, subscribes his name and the sum in which of the columns he pleases; and the amount of what is collected in each column is paid over to the minister of that denomination. In this scheme it is not left to the option of the subject, whether he will contribute, or how much he shall contribute, to the maintenance of a Christian ministry; it is only referred to his choice to determine by what sect his contribution shall be received. The above arrangement is undoubtedly the best that has been proposed upon this principle; it bears the appearance of liberality and justice; it may contain some solid advantages; nevertheless, it labours under inconveniences which will be found, I think, upon trial, to overbalance all its recommendations. It is scarcely compatible with that which is the first requisite in an ecclesiastical establishment,—the division of the coun-

try into parishes of a commodious extent. If the parishes be small, and ministers of every denomination be stationed in each (which the plan seems to suppose), the expense of their maintenance will become too burdensome a charge for the country to support. If, to reduce the expense, the districts be enlarged, the place of assembling will oftentimes be too far removed from the residence of the persons who ought to resort to it. Again, the making the pecuniary success of the different teachers of religion to depend on the number and wealth of their respective followers, would naturally generate strifes and indecent jealousies amongst them; as well as produce a polemical and proselyting spirit, founded in or mixed with views of private gain, which would both deprave the principles of the clergy, and distract the country with endless contentions.

The argument, then, by which ecclesiastical establishments are defended, proceeds by these steps:—The knowledge and profession of Christianity cannot be upholden without a clergy; a clergy cannot be supported without a legal provision: a legal provision for the clergy cannot be constituted without the preference of one sect of Christians to the rest; and the conclusion will be conveniently satisfactory in the degree in which the truth of these several propositions can be made out.

If it be deemed expedient to establish a national religion, that is to say, one sect in preference to all others; some *test*, by which the teachers of that sect may be distinguished from the teachers of different sects, appears to be an indispensable consequence. The existence of such an establishment supposes it: the very notion of a national religion includes that of a test.

But this necessity, which is real, hath according to the fashion of human affairs, furnished to almost every church a pretence for extending, multiplying, and continuing such tests beyond what the occasion justified. For though some purposes of order and tranquillity may be answered by the establishment of creeds and confessions, yet they are at all times attended with serious inconveniences; they check inquiry; they violate liberty; they insnare the consciences of the clergy, by holding out temptations to prevarication; however they may express the persuasion, or be accommodated to the controversies, or to the fears of the age in which they are composed, in process of time, and by reason of the changes which are wont to take place in the judgment of mankind upon religious subjects, they come at length to contradict the actual opinions of the church, whose doctrines they profess to contain; and they often perpetuate the proscription of sects, and tenets, from which any danger has long ceased to be apprehended.

It may not follow from these objections, that tests and subscriptions ought to be abolished; but it follows, that they ought to be made as simple and easy as possible; that they should be adapted, from time to time, to the varying sentiments and circumstances of the church in which they are received; and that they should at no time advance one step farther than some subsisting necessity requires. If, for instance, promises of conformity to the rites, liturgy, and offices, of the church, be sufficient to prevent confusion and disorder in the celebration of divine worship, then such promises ought to be accepted in the place of stricter subscriptions.

If articles of *peace*, as they are called, that is, engagements not to preach certain doctrines, nor to revive certain controversies, would exclude indecent altercations amongst the national clergy, as well as secure to the public teaching of religion as much of uniformity and quiet as is necessary to edification; then confessions of faith ought to be converted into articles of peace. In a word, it ought to be holden a sufficient reason for relaxing the terms of subscription, or for dropping any or all of the articles to be subscribed, that no *present* necessity requires the strictness which is complained of, or that it should be extended to so many points of doctrine.

The division of the country into districts, and the stationing in each district a teacher of religion, forms the substantial part of every church-establishment. The varieties that have been introduced into the government and discipline of different churches, are of inferior importance, when compared with this, in which they all agree. Of these economical questions, none seems more material than that which has been long agitated in the reformed churches of Christendom, whether a parity amongst the clergy, or a distinction of orders in the ministry, be more conducive to the general ends of the institution. In favour of that system which the laws of this country have preferred we may allege the following reasons: that it secures tranquillity and subordination amongst the clergy themselves; that it corresponds with the gradations of rank in civil life, and provides for the edification of each rank, by stationing in each an order of clergy of their own class and quality; and, lastly, that the same fund produces more effect, both as an allurement to men of talents to enter into the church, and as a stimulus to the industry of those who are already in it, when distributed into prizes of different value, than when divided into equal shares.

After the state has once established a particular system of faith as a national religion, a question will soon occur, concerning the treatment and toleration of those who *dissent* from it. This question is properly preceded by another, concerning the right which the civil magistrate possesses to interfere in matters of religion at all: for although this right be acknowledged whilst he is employed solely in providing means of public instruction, it will probably be disputed (indeed it ever has been), when he proceeds to inflict penalties, to impose restraints or incapacities, on the account of religious distinctions. They who admit no other just original of civil government, than what is founded in some stipulation with its subjects, are at liberty to contend that the concerns of religion were excepted out of the social compact; that in an affair which can only be transacted between God and a man's own conscience, no commission or authority was ever delegated to the civil magistrate, or could indeed be transferred from the person himself to any other. We, however, who have rejected this theory, because we cannot discover any actual contract between the state and the people, and because we cannot allow any arbitrary fiction to be made the foundation of real rights and of real obligations, find ourselves precluded from this distinction. The reasoning which deduces the authority of civil government from the will of God, and which collects that will from public expediency alone, binds us to the unreserved conclusion, that the jurisdiction of the magistrate is limited

by no consideration but that of general utility: in plainer terms, that whatever be the subject to be regulated, it is lawful for him to interfere whenever his interference, in its general tendency, appears to be conducive to the common interest. There is nothing in the nature of religion, as such, which exempts it from the authority of the legislator when the safety or welfare of the community requires his interposition. It has been said, indeed, that religion, pertaining to the interests of a life to come, lies beyond the province of civil government, the office of which is confined to the affairs of this life. But in reply to this objection it may be observed, that when the laws interfere even in religion, they interfere only with temporals; their effects terminate, their power operates only upon those rights and interests, which confessedly belong to their disposal. The acts of the legislature, the edicts of the prince, the sentence of the judge, cannot affect my salvation; nor do they, without the most absurd arrogance, pretend to any such power; but they may deprive me of liberty, of property, and even of life itself, on account of my religion; and however I may complain of the injustice of the sentence by which I am condemned, I cannot allege that the magistrate has transgressed the boundaries of his jurisdiction; because the property, the liberty, and the life, of the subject, *may* be taken away by the authority of the laws, for any reason which, in the judgment of the legislature, renders such a measure necessary to the common welfare. Moreover, as the precepts of religion may regulate all the offices of life, or may be so construed as to extend to all, the exemption of religion from the control of human laws might afford a plea, which would exclude civil government from every authority over the conduct of its subjects. Religious liberty is, like civil liberty, not an immunity from restraint, but the being restrained by no law, but what in a greater degree conduces to the public welfare.

Still it is right "to obey God rather than man." Nothing that we have said encroaches upon the truth of this sacred and undisputed maxim: the right of the magistrate to ordain, and the obligation of the subject to obey, in matters of religion, may be very different; and will be so, as often as they flow from opposite apprehensions of the Divine will. In affairs that are properly of a civil nature, in "the things that are Cæsar's," this difference seldom happens. The law authorizes the act which it enjoins; revelation being either silent upon the subject, or referring to the laws of the country, or requiring only that men act by some fixed rule, and that this rule be established by competent authority. But when human laws interpose their direction in matters of religion, by dictating, for example, the object or the mode of divine worship; by prohibiting the profession of some articles of faith and by exacting that of others, they are liable to clash with what private persons believe to be already settled by precepts of revelation; or to contradict what God himself, they think hath declared to be true. In this case, on whichever side the mistake lies, or whatever plea the state may allege to justify its edict, the subject can have none to excuse his compliance. The same consideration also points out the distinction, as to the authority of the state, between temporals and spirituals. The magistrate is not to be obeyed in temporals more than in spirituals, where a repugnancy is perceived between his commands and any credited mannifestations of the Divine will; but such repugnancies are much less likely to arise in one case than the other.

When we grant that it is lawful for the magistrate to interfere in religion as often as his interference appears to him to conduce, in its general tendency, to the public happiness; it may be argued, from this concession, that since salvation is the highest interest of mankind, and since, consequently, to advance *that* is to promote the public happiness in the best way, and in the greatest degree, it which it can be promoted, it follows, that it is not only the right, but the duty, of every magistrate invested with supreme power, to enforce upon his subjects the reception of that religion which he deems most acceptable to God; and to enforce it by such methods as may appear most effectual for the end proposed. A popish king, for example, who should believe that salvation is not attainable out of the precincts of the Romish church, would derive a right from our principles (not to say that he would be bound by them) to employ the power with which the constitution intrusted him, and which power, in absolute monarchies, commands the lives and fortunes of every subject of the empire, in reducing his people within that communion. We confess that this consequence is inferred from the principles we have laid down concerning the foundation of civil authority, not without the resemblance of a regular deduction; we confess also that it is a conclusion which it behoves us to dispose of; because, if it really follow from our theory of government, the theory itself ought to be given up. Now it will be remembered, that the terms of our proposition are these: "That it is lawful for the magistrate to interfere in the affairs of religion, whenever his interference appears to him to conduce, by its general tendency, to the public happiness," The clause of "general tendency," when this rule comes to be applied, will be found a very significant part of the direction. It obliges the magistrate to reflect, not only whether the religion which he wishes to propagate amongst his subjects, be that which will best secure their eternal welfare; not only whether the methods he employs be likely to effectuate the establishment of that religion; but also upon this farther question: whether the kind of interference which he is about to exercise, if it were adopted as a common maxim amongst states and princes, or received as a general rule for the conduct of government in matters of religion, would, upon the whole, and in the mass of instances in which this example might be imitated, conduce to the furtherance of human salvation. If the magistrate, for example, should think, that although the application of his power might, in the instance concerning which he deliberates, advance the true religion, and together with it the happiness of his people, yet that the same engine, in other hands, who might assume the right to use it with the like pretensions of reason and authority that he himself alleges, would more frequently shut out truth, and obstruct the means of salvation; he would be bound by this opinion, still admitting public utility to be the supreme rule of his conduct, to refrain from expedients, which, whatever particular effects *he* may expect from them, are, in their general operation, dangerous or hurtful. If there be any difficulty in the subject, it arises from that which is the cause of every difficulty in morals,—the competition of particular and general consequences; or, what is the same thing, the submission of one general rule to another rule which is still more general.

Bearing then in mind, that it is the *general* tendency of the measure,

or in other words, the effects which would arise from the measure being *generally* adopted, that fixes upon it the character of rectitude or injustice; we proceed to inquire what is the degree and the sort of interference of secular laws in matters of religion, which are likely to be beneficial to the public happiness. There are two maxims which will in a great measure regulate our conclusions upon this head. The first is, that any form of Christianity is better than no religion at all; the second, that, of different systems of faith, that is the best which is the truest. The first of these positions will hardly be disputed, when we reflect that every sect and modification of Christianity holds out the happiness and misery of another life, as depending chiefly upon the practice of virtue or of vice in this; and that the distinctions of virtue and vice are nearly the same in all. A person who acts under the impression of these hopes and fears, though combined with many errors and superstitions, is more likely to advance both the public happiness and his own, than one who is destitute of all expectation of a future account. The latter proposition is founded in the consideration that the principal importance of religion consists in its influence upon the fate and condition of a future existence. This influence belongs only to that religion which comes from God. A political religion may be framed, which shall embrace the purposes, and describe the duties, of political society perfectly well; but if it be not delivered by God, what assurance does it afford, that the decisions of the Divine Judgment will have any regard to the rules which it contains? By a man who acts with a view to a future judgment, the authority of a religion is the first thing inquired after; a religion which wants authority, with him wants every thing. Since then this authority appertains, not to the religion which is most commodious,—to the religion which is most sublime and efficacious,—to the religion which suits best with the form, or seems most calculated to uphold the power and stability, of civil government,—but only to that religion which comes from God; we are justified in pronouncing the *true* religion by its very truth, and independently of all considerations of tendencies, aptnesses, or any other internal qualities whatever, to be universally the best.

From the first proposition follows this inference, that when the state enables its subjects to learn *some* form of Christianity, by distributing teachers of a religious system throughout the country, and by providing for the maintenance of these teachers at the public expense: that is, in fewer terms, when the laws *establish* a national religion, they exercise a power and an interference which are likely, in their general tendency, to promote the interest of mankind: for, even supposing the species of Christianity which the laws patronize to be erroneous and corrupt, yet when the option lies between this religion and no religion at all (which would be the consequence of leaving the people without any public means of instruction, or any regular celebration of the offices of Christianity), our proposition teaches us that the former alternative is constantly to be preferred.

But after the right of the magistrate to establish a particular religion has been, upon this principle, admitted; a doubt sometimes presents itself, whether the religion which he ought to establish, be that which he himself professes, or that which he observes to prevail amongst the majority of the people. Now when we consider this ques-

tion with a view to the formation of a general rule upon the subject (which view alone can furnish a just solution of the doubt), it must be assumed to be an equal chance whether of the two religions contains more of truth,—that of the magistrate, or that of the people. The chance then that is left to truth being equal upon both suppositions, the remaining consideration will be, from which arrangement more efficacy can be expected: from an order of men appointed to teach the people their own religion, or to convert them to another? In my opinion, the advantage lies on the side of the former scheme: and this opinion, if it be assented to, makes it the duty of the magistrate, in the choice of the religion which he establishes, to consult the faith of the nation, rather than his own.

The case also of dissenters must be determined by the principles just now stated. *Toleration* is of two kinds;—the allowing to dissenters the unmolested profession and exercise of their religion; but with an exclusion from offices of trust and emolument in the state; which is a *partial* toleration: and the admitting them, without distinction, to all the civil privileges and capacities of other citizens; which is a *complete* toleration. The expediency of toleration, and consequently the right of every citizen to demand it, as far as relates to liberty of conscience, and the claim of being protected in the free and safe profession of his religion, is deducible from the *second* of those propositions which we have delivered as the grounds of our conclusions upon the subject. That proposition asserts truth, and truth in the abstract, to be the supreme perfection of every religion. The advancement, consequently, and discovery of truth, is that end to which all regulations concerning religion ought principally to be adapted. Now every species of intolerance which enjoins suppression and silence, and every species of persecution which enforces such injunctions, is adverse to the progress of truth; forasmuch as it causes that to be fixed by one set of men, at one time, which is much better, and with much more probability of success, left to the independent and progressive inquiry of separate individuals. Truth results from discussion and from controversy; it is investigated by the labours and researches of private persons. Whatever, therefore, prohibits these, obstructs that industry and that liberty, which it is the common interest of mankind to promote. In religion, as in other subjects, truth, if left to itself, will almost always obtain the ascendancy. If different religions be professed in the same country, and the minds of men remain unfettered and unawed by intimidations of law, that religion which is founded in maxims of reason and credibility, will gradually gain over the other to it. I do not mean that men will formally renounce their ancient religion, but that they will adopt into it more rational doctrines, the improvements and discoveries of the neighbouring sect; by which means the worse religion, without the ceremony of a reformation, will insensibly assimilate itself to the better. If Popery, for instance, and Protestantism were permitted to dwell quietly together, Papists might not become Protestants (for the name is commonly the last thing that is changed),* but

* Would we let the *name* stand, we might often attract men, without their perceiving it, much nearer to ourselves, than, if they did perceive it, they would be willing to come.

they would become more enlightened and informed; they would by little and little incorporate into their creed many of the tenets of Protestantism, as well as imbibe a portion of its spirit and moderation.

The justice and expediency of toleration we found primarily in its conduciveness to truth, and in the superior value of truth to that of any other quality which a religion can possess; this is the principal argument; but there are some auxiliary considerations, too important to be omitted. The confining of the subject to the religion of the state, is a needless violation of natural liberty, and is an instance in which constraint is always grievous. Persecution produces no sincere conviction, nor any real change of opinion; on the contrary, it vitiates the public morals, by driving men to prevarication; and commonly ends in a general though secret infidelity, by imposing, under the name of revealed religion, systems of doctrine which men cannot believe, and dare not examine: finally, it disgraces the character, and wounds the reputation, of Christianity itself, by making it the author of oppression, cruelty, and bloodshed.

Under the idea of religious toleration, I include the toleration of all books of serious argumentation; but I deem it no infringement of religious liberty, to restrain the circulation of ridicule, invective, and mockery, upon religious subjects; because this species of writing applies solely to the passions, weakens the judgment, and contaminates the imagination, of its readers; has no tendency whatever to assist either the investigation or the impression of truth: on the contrary, whilst it stays not to distinguish between the authority of different religions, it destroys alike the influence of all.

Concerning the admission of dissenters from the established religion to offices and employments in the public service (which is necessary to render toleration *complete*), doubts have been entertained, with some appearance of reason. It is possible that such religious opinions may be holden, as are utterly incompatible with the necessary functions of civil government; and which opinions consequently disqualify those who maintain them, from exercising any share in its administration. There have been enthusiasts who held that Christianity has abolished all distinction of property, and that she enjoins upon her followers a community of goods. With what tolerable propriety could one of this sect be appointed a judge or a magistrate, whose office it is to decide upon questions of private right, and to protect men in the exclusive enjoyment of their property? It would be equally absurd to intrust a military command to a Quaker, who believes it to be contrary to the gospel to take up arms. This is possible; therefore it cannot be laid down as a universal truth, that religion is not, in its nature, a cause which will justify exclusion from public employments. When we examine, however, the sects of Christianity which actually prevail in the world, we must confess that, with the single exception of refusing to bear arms, we find no tenet in any of them which incapacitates men for the service of the state. It has indeed been asserted, that discordancy of religions, even supposing each religion to be free from any errors that affect the safety or the conduct of government, is enough to render men unfit to act together in public stations. But upon what argument, or upon what experience is this assertion founded? I perceive no reason why men of different religious persuasions may not

sit down upon the same bench, deliberate in the same council, or fight in the same ranks, as well as men of various or opposite opinions upon any controverted topic of natural philosophy, history, or ethics.

There are two cases in which test laws are wont to be applied, and in which, if in any, they may be defended. One is, where two or more religions are contending for establishment, and where there appears no way of putting an end to the contest, but by giving to one religion such a decided superiority in the legislature and government of the country, as to secure it against danger from any other. I own that I should assent to this precaution with many scruples. If the dissenters from the establishment become a majority of the people, the establishment itself ought to be altered or qualified. If there exist amongst the different sects of the country such a parity of numbers, interest and power, as to render the preference of one sect to the rest, and the choice of that sect a matter of hazardous success, and of doubtful election, some plan similar to that which is meditated in North America, and which we have described in a preceding part of the present chapter, though encumbered with great difficulties, may perhaps suit better with this divided state of public opinion, than any constitution of a national church whatever. In all other situations, the establishment will be strong enough to maintain itself. However, if a test be applicable with justice upon this principal at all, it ought to be applied in regal governments to the chief magistrate himself, whose power might otherwise overthrow or change the established religion of the country, in opposition to the will and sentiments of the people.

The second case of *exclusion*, and in which, I think, the measure is more easily vindicated, is that of a country in which some disaffection to the subsisting government happens to be connected with certain religious distinctions. The state undoubtedly has a right to refuse its power and its confidence to those who seek its destruction. Wherefore, if the generality of any religious sect entertain dispositions hostile to the constitution, and if government have no other way of knowing its enemies than by the religion which they profess, the professors of that religion may justly be excluded from offices of trust and authority. But even *here* it should be observed, that it is not against the religion that government shuts its doors, but against those political principles, which, however independent they may be of any article of religious faith, the members of that communion are found in fact to hold. Nor would the legislator make religious tenets the test of men's inclinations towards the state, if he could discover any other that was equally certain and notorious. Thus, if the members of the Romish church, for the most part, adhere to the interests, or maintain the right, of a foreign pretender to the crown of these kingdoms; and if there be no way of distinguishing those who do from those who do not retain such dangerous prejudices; government is well warranted in fencing out the whole sect from situations of trust and power. But even in this example, it is not to popery that the laws object, but to popery as the mark of jacobitism; an equivocal indeed and fallacious mark, but the best, and perhaps the only one, that can be devised. But then it should be remembered, that as the connexion between popery and jacobitism, which is the sole cause of suspicion, and the sole justification of those severe and jealous laws which have been enacted against

the professors of that religion, was accidental in its origin, so probably it will be temporary in its duration; and that these restrictions ought not to continue one day longer than some visible danger renders them necessary to the preservation of public tranquillity.

After all, it may be asked, Why should not the legislator direct his test against the political principles themselves which he wishes to exclude, rather than encounter them through the medium of religious tenets, the only crime and the only danger of which consists in their presumed alliance with the former? Why, for example, should a man be required to renounce transubstantiation, before he be admitted to an office in the state, when it might seem to be sufficient that he abjure the pretender? There are but two answers that can be given to the objection which this question contains: first, that it is not opinions which the laws fear, so much as inclinations; and that political inclinations are not so easily detected by the affirmation or denial of any abstract proposition in politics, as by the discovery of the religious creed with which they are wont to be united:—secondly, that when men renounce their religion, they commonly quit all connexion with the members of the church which they have left; that church no longer expecting assistance or friendship from them; whereas particular persons might insinuate themselves into offices of trust and authority, by subscribing political assertions, and yet retain their predilection for the interest of the religious sect to which they continued to belong. By which means, government would sometimes find, though it could not accuse the individual, whom it had received into its service, of disaffection to the civil establishment, yet that, through him, it had communicated the aid and influence of a powerful station to a party who were hostile to the constitution. These answers however we propose rather than defend. The measure certainly cannot be defended at all, except where the suspected union between certain obnoxious principles in politics, and certain tenets in religion, is nearly universal; in which case, it makes little difference to the subscriber, whether the test be religious or political: and the state is somewhat better secured by the one than the other.

The result of our examination of those general tendencies, by which every interference of civil government in matters of religion ought to be tried, is this: "That a comprehensive national religion, guarded by a few articles of peace and conformity, together with a legal provision for the clergy of that religion; and with a *complete* toleration of all dissenters from the established church, without any other limitation or exception, than what arises from the conjunction of dangerous political dispositions with certain religious tenets; appears to be, not only the most just and liberal, but the wisest and safest system, which a state can adopt; inasmuch as it unites the several perfections which a religious constitution ought to aim at:—liberty of conscience, with means of instruction; the progress of truth, with the peace of society; the right of private judgment, with the care of the public safety."

CHAPTER XI.

Of population and provision; and of agriculture and commerce, as subservient thereto.

THE final view of all rational politics is, to produce the greatest quantity of happiness in a given tract of country. The riches, strength and glory, of nations; the topics which history celebrates, and which alone almost engage the praises and possess the admiration of mankind; have no value farther than as they contribute to this end. When they interfere with it, they are evils, and not the less real for the splendour that surrounds them.

Secondly, Although we speak of communities as of sentient beings; although we ascribe to them happiness and misery, desires, interests, and passions; nothing really exists or feels but *individuals*. The happiness of a people is made up of the happiness of single persons; and the quantity of happiness can only be augmented by increasing the number of the percipients, or the pleasure of their perceptions.

Thirdly, Notwithstanding that diversity of condition, especially different degrees of plenty, freedom, and security, greatly vary the quantity of happiness enjoyed by the same number of individuals; and notwithstanding that extreme cases may be found, of human beings so galled by the rigours of slavery, that the increase of numbers is only the amplification of misery; yet, within certain limits, and within those limits to which civil life is diversified under the temperate governments that obtain in Europe, it may be affirmed, I think, with certainty, that the quantity of happiness produced in any given district, *so far* depends upon the number of inhabitants, that in comparing adjoining periods in the same country, the collective happiness will be nearly in the exact proportion of the numbers, that is, twice the number of inhabitants will produce double the quantity of happiness; in distant periods, and different countries, under great changes, or great dissimilitude of civil condition, although the proportion of enjoyment may fall much short of that of the numbers, yet still any considerable excess of numbers will usually carry with it a preponderation of happiness; that, at least, it may and ought to be assumed in all political deliberations, that a larger portion of happiness is enjoyed amongst *ten* persons, possessing the means of healthy subsistence, than can be produced by *five* persons, under every advantage of power, affluence, and luxury.

From these principles it follows, that the quantity of happiness in a given district, although it is possible it may be increased, the number of inhabitants remaining the same, is chiefly and most naturally affected by alteration of the numbers: that, consequently, the decay of population is the greatest evil that a state can suffer; and the improvement of it the object which ought, in all countries, to be aimed at in preference to every other political purpose whatsoever.

The importance of population, and the superiority of *it* to every other national advantage, are points necessary to be inculcated, and to be understood; inasmuch as false estimates, or fantastic notions,

of national grandeur, are perpetually drawing the attention of statesmen and legislators from the care of this, which is, at all times, the true and absolute interest of a country: for which reason, we have stated these points with unusual formality. We will confess, however, that a competition can seldom arise between the advancement of population and any measure of sober utility; because, in the ordinary progress of human affairs, whatever, in any way, contributes to make a people happier, tends to render them more numerous.

In the fecundity of the human, as of every other species of animals, nature has provided for an indefinite multiplication. Mankind have increased to their present number from a single pair: the offspring of early marriages, in the ordinary course of procreation, do more than replace the parents: in countries, and under circumstances, very favourable to subsistence, the population has been doubled in the space of twenty years; the havock occasioned by wars, earthquakes, famine, or pestilence, is usually repaired in a short time. These indications sufficiently demonstrate the tendency of nature, in the human species, to a continual increase of its numbers. It becomes therefore a question that may reasonably be propounded, what are the causes which confine or check the natural progress of this multiplication? And the answer which first presents itself to the thoughts of the inquirer is, that the population of a country must stop when the country can maintain no more, that is, when the inhabitants are already so numerous as to exhaust all the provisions which the soil can be made to produce. This, however, though an insuperable bar, will seldom be found to be *that* which actually checks the progress of population in any country of the world; because the number of the people have seldom, in any country, arrived at this limit, or even approached to it. The fertility of the ground, in temperate regions, is capable of being improved by cultivation, to an extent which is unknown; much, however, beyond the state of improvement in any country in Europe. In our own, which holds almost the first place in the knowledge and encouragement of agriculture, let it only be supposed that every field in England, of the same original quality with those in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and consequently capable of the same fertility, were by a like management made to yield an equal produce; and it may be asserted, I believe with truth, that the quantity of human provision raised in the island would be increased five-fold. The two principles, therefore, upon which population seems primarily to depend, the fecundity of the species, and the capacity of the soil, would in most, perhaps in all countries, enable it to proceed much farther than it has yet advanced. The number of marriageable women, who, in each country remain unmarried, afford a computation how much the agency of nature in the diffusion of human life is cramped and contracted: and the quantity of waste, neglected, or mismanaged surface,—together with a comparison, like the preceding, of the crops raised from the soil in the neighbourhood of populous cities, and under a perfect state of cultivation, with those which lands of equal or superior quality yield in different situations,—will shew in what proportion the indigenous productions of the earth are capable of being farther augmented.

The fundamental proposition upon the subject of *population*, which

must guide every endeavour to improve it, and from which every conclusion concerning it may be deduced, is this: "Wherever the commerce between the sexes is regulated by marriage, and a provision for that mode of subsistence, to which each class of the community is accustomed, can be procured with ease and certainty, there the number of the people will increase; and the rapidity, as well as the extent, of the increase, will be proportioned to the degree in which these causes exist."

This proposition we will draw out into the several principles which it contains.

I. First, the proposition asserts the "necessity of confining the intercourse of the sexes to the marriage union." It is only in the marriage union that this intercourse is sufficiently prolific. Beside which, family establishments alone are fitted to perpetuate a succession of generations. The offspring of a vague and promiscuous concubinage are not only few, and liable to perish by neglect, but are seldom prepared for or introduced into situations suited to the raising of families of their own. Hence the advantages of marriages. Now nature, in the constitution of the sexes, has provided a stimulus which will infallibly secure the frequency of marriages, with all their beneficial effects upon the state of population, provided the male part of the species be prohibited from irregular gratifications. This impulse, which is sufficient to surmount almost every impediment to marriage, will operate in proportion to the difficulty, expense, danger, or infamy, the sense of guilt, or the fear of punishment, which attend licentious indulgences. Wherefore, in countries in which subsistence is become scarce, it behoves the state to watch over the public morals with increased solicitude; for nothing but the instinct of nature, under the restraint of chastity, will induce men to undertake the labour or consent to the sacrifice of personal liberty and indulgence, which the support of a family, in such circumstances, requires.

II. The second requisite which our proposition states as necessary to the success of population, is, "the ease and certainty with which a provision can be procured for that mode of subsistence to which each class of the community is accustomed." It is not enough that men's *natural* wants be supplied; that a provision adequate to the real exigencies of human life be attainable: habitual superfluities become actual wants; opinion and fashion convert articles of ornament and luxury into necessaries of life. And it must not be expected from men in general, at least in the present relaxed state of morals and discipline, that they will enter into marriages which degrade their condition, reduce their mode of living, deprive them of the accommodations to which they have been accustomed, or even of those ornaments and appendages of rank and station which they have been taught to regard as belonging to their birth, or class, or profession, or place in society. The same consideration, namely, a view to their *accustomed* mode of life, which is so apparent in the superior orders of the people, has no less influence upon those ranks which compose the mass of the community. The kind and quality of food and liquor, the species of habitation, furniture, and clothing, to which the common people of each country are habituated, must be attainable with ease and certainty, before marriages will be sufficiently early and general to carry the pro-

gress of population to its just extent. It is in vain to allege, that a more simple diet, ruder habitations, or coarser apparel, would be sufficient for the purposes of life and health, or even of physical ease and pleasure. Men will not marry with this encouragement. For instance, when the common people of a country are accustomed, to eat a large proportion of animal food, to drink wine, spirits, or beer, to wear shoes and stockings, to dwell in stone houses, they will not marry to live in clay cottages, upon roots and milk, with no other clothing than skins, or what is necessary to defend the trunk of the body from the effects of cold; although these last may be all that the sustentation of life and health requires, or that even contribute much to animal comfort and enjoyment.

The ease then, and certainty, with which the means can be procured, not barely of subsistence, but of that mode of subsisting which custom hath in each country established, form the point upon which the state and progress of population chiefly depend. Now there are three causes which evidently regulate this point: the mode itself of subsisting which prevails in the country; the quantity of provision suited to that mode of subsistence, which is either raised in the country or imported into it; and lastly, the distribution of that provision.

These three causes merit distinct consideration.

I. The mode of living which actually obtains in a country. In China, where the inhabitants frequent the sea-shore, or the banks of large rivers, and subsist in a great measure upon fish, the population is described to be excessive. This peculiarity arises, not probably from any civil advantages, any care or policy, any particular constitution or superior wisdom of government; but simply from hence, that the species of food to which custom hath reconciled the desires and inclinations of the inhabitants, is that which, of all others, is procured in the greatest abundance, with the most ease, and stands in need of the least preparation. The natives of Indostan being confined, by the laws of their religion, to the use of vegetable food, and requiring little except rice, which the country produces in plentiful crops; and food, in warm climates, composing the only want of life; these countries are populous, under all the injuries of a despotic, and the agitations of an unsettled, government. If any revolution, or what would be called perhaps refinement of manners, should generate in these people a taste for the flesh of animals, similar to what prevails amongst the Arabian hordes; should introduce flocks and herds into grounds which are now covered with corn; should teach them to account a certain portion of this species of food amongst the necessaries of life; the population, from this single change, would suffer in a few years a great diminution: and this diminution would follow, in spite of every effort of the laws, or even of any improvement that might take place in their civil condition. In Ireland, the simplicity of living alone maintains a considerable degree of population, under great defects of police, industry, and commerce.

Under this head, and from a view of these considerations, may be understood the true evil and proper danger of *luxury*.

Luxury, as it supplies employment and promotes industry, assists population. But then there is another consequence attending it, which counteracts and often overbalances these advantages. When, by in-

troducing more superfluities into general reception, luxury has rendered the usual accommodations of life more expensive, artificial, and elaborate, the difficulty of maintaining a family, conformably with the established mode of living, becomes greater, and what each man has to spare from his personal consumption proportionably less: the effect of which is, that marriages grow less frequent, agreeably to the maxim above laid down, and which must be remembered as the foundation of all our reasoning upon the subject, that men will not marry to *sink* their place or condition in society, or to forego those indulgences which their own habits, or what they observe amongst their equals, have rendered necessary to their satisfaction. This principle is applicable to every article of diet and dress, to houses, furniture, attendance; and this effect will be felt in every class of the community. For instance: the custom of wearing broad-cloth and fine linen repays the shepherd and flax-grower, feeds the manufacturer, enriches the merchant, gives not only support but existence to multitudes of families: hitherto, therefore, the effects are beneficial: and were these the only effects, such elegances, or, if you please to call them so, such luxuries, could not be too universal. But here follows the mischief: when once fashion hath annexed the use of these articles of dress to any certain class, the middling ranks, for example, of the community, each individual of that rank finds them to be *necessaries* of life; that is, finds himself obliged to comply with the example of his equals, and to maintain that appearance which the custom of society requires. This obligation creates such a demand upon his income, and which adds so much to the cost and burden of a family, as to put it out of his power to marry, with the prospect of continuing his habits, or of maintaining his place and situation in the world. We see, in this description, the cause which induces men to waste their lives in a barren celibacy; and this cause, which impairs the very source of population, is justly placed to the account of luxury.

It appears, then, that *luxury*, considered with a view to population, acts by two opposite effects; and it seems probable that there exists a point in the scale, to which luxury may ascend, or to which the wants of mankind may be multiplied with advantage to the community, and beyond which the prejudicial consequences begin to preponderate. The determination of this point, though it assume the form of an arithmetical problem, depends upon circumstances too numerous, intricate, and undefined, to admit of a precise solution. However, from what has been observed concerning the tendency of luxury to diminish marriages, in which tendency the evil of it resides, the following general conclusions may be established:—

1st, That, of different kinds of luxury, those are the most innocent, which afford employment to the greatest number of artists and manufacturers; or those, in other words, in which the price of the work bears the greatest proportion to that of the raw material. Thus, luxury in dress or furniture is universally preferable to luxury in eating, because the articles which constitute the one, are more the production of human art and industry, than those which supply the other.

2dly, That it is the *diffusion*, rather than the *degree*, of luxury, which is to be dreaded as a national evil. The mischief of luxury

consists, as we have seen in the obstruction which it forms to marriage. Now it is only a small part of the people that the higher ranks in any country compose; for which reason the facility or the difficulty of supporting the expense of *their* station, and the consequent increase or diminution of marriages among *them*, will influence the state of population but little. So long as the prevalency of luxury is confined to a few of elevated rank, much of the benefit is felt, and little of the inconveniency. But when the imitation of the same manners descends, as it always will do, into the mass of the people; when it advances the requisites of living, beyond what it adds to men's abilities to purchase them; then it is that luxury checks the formation of families, in a degree that ought to alarm the public fears.

3dly, That the condition most favourable to population is that of a laborious, frugal people, ministering to the demands of an opulent, luxurious nation; because this situation, whilst it leaves them every advantage of luxury, exempts them from the evils which naturally accompany its admission into any country.

II. Next to the mode of living, we are to consider "the quantity of provision suited to that mode, which is either raised in the country, or imported into it:" for this is the order in which we assigned the causes of population, and undertook to treat of them. Now, if we measure the quantity of provision by the number of human bodies it will support in due health and vigour, this quantity, the extent and quality of the soil from which it is raised being given, will depend greatly upon the *kind*. For instance; a piece of ground capable of supplying animal food sufficient for the subsistence of ten persons, would sustain, at least, the double of that number with grain, roots, and milk. The first resource of savage life is in the flesh of wild animals; hence the numbers amongst savage nations, compared with the tract of country which they occupy, are universally small; because this species of provision is, of all others, supplied in the slenderest proportion. The next step was the invention of pasturage, or the rearing of flocks and herds of tame animals: this alteration added to the stock of provision much. But the last and principal improvement was to follow; namely, tillage, or the artificial production of corn, esculent plants, and roots. This discovery, whilst it changed the quality of human food, augmented the quantity in a vast proportion. So far as the state of population is governed and limited by the quantity of provision, perhaps there is no single cause that affects it so powerfully, as the kind and quality of food which chance or usage hath introduced into a country. In England, notwithstanding the produce of the soil has been, of late, considerably increased, by the enclosure of wastes, and the adoption, in many places, of a more successful husbandry, yet we do not observe a corresponding addition to the number of inhabitants; the reason of which appears to me to be, the more general consumption of animal food amongst us. Many ranks of people whose ordinary diet was, in the last century, prepared almost entirely from milk, roots, and vegetables, now require every day a considerable portion of the flesh of animals. Hence a great part of the richest lands in the country are converted into pasturage. Much also of the bread corn, which went directly to the nourishment of human bodies, now only contributes to it by fattening the flesh of sheep and oxen. The mass and volume of

provisions are hereby diminished; and what is gained in the melioration of the soil, is lost in the quality of the produce. This consideration teacheth us, that tillage, as an object of national care and encouragement, is universally preferable to pasturage, because the kind of provision which it yields, goes much farther in the sustenation of human life. Tillage is also recommended by this additional advantage, that it affords employment to a much more numerous peasantry. Indeed, pasturage seems to be the art of a nation, either imperfectly civilized, as are many of the tribes which cultivate it in the internal parts of Asia; or of a nation, like Spain, declining from its summit by luxury and inactivity.

The kind and quality of provision, together with the extent and capacity of the soil from which it is raised, being the same, the quantity procured will principally depend upon two circumstances,—the *ability* of the occupier, and the *encouragement* which he receives. The greatest misfortune of a country is an indigent tenantry. Whatever be the native advantages of the soil, or even the skill and industry of the occupier, the want of a sufficient capital confines every plan, as well as cripples and weakens every operation, of husbandry. This evil is felt, where agriculture is accounted a servile or mean employment; where farms are extremely subdivided, and badly furnished with habitations; where leases are unknown, or are of short or precarious duration. With respect to the *encouragement* of husbandry; in this, as in every other employment, the true reward of industry is in the price and sale of the produce. The exclusive right to the produce is the only incitement which acts constantly and universally; the only spring which keeps human labour in motion. All, therefore, that the laws can do, is to secure this right to the occupier of the ground, that is, to constitute such a system of tenure, that the full and entire advantage of every improvement go to the benefit of the improver; that every man work for himself, and not for another; and that no one share in the profit who does not assist in the production. By the *occupier* I here mean, not so much the person who performs the work, as him who procures the labour and directs the management: and I consider the whole profit as *received* by the occupier, when the occupier is benefited by the whole value of what is produced, which is the case with the tenant who pays a fixed rent for the use of land, no less than with the proprietor who holds it as his own. The one has the same interest in the produce, and in the advantage of every improvement, as the other. Likewise the proprietor, though he grant out his estate to farm, may be considered as the *occupier*, insomuch as he regulates the occupation by the choice, superintendency, and encouragement, of his tenants, by the disposition of his lands, by erecting buildings, providing accommodations, by prescribing conditions, or supplying implements and materials of improvement; and is entitled, by the rule of public expediency above mentioned, to receive, in the advance of his rent, a share of the benefit which arises from the increased produce of his estate. The violation of this fundamental maxim of agrarian policy constitutes the chief objection to the holding of lands by the state, by the king, by corporate bodies, by private persons in right of their offices or benefices. The inconveniency to the public arises not so much from the inalienable quality of lands thus holden in perpetuity,

as from hence; that proprietors of this description seldom contribute much either of attention or expense to the cultivation of their estates, yet claim, by the rent, a share in the profit of every improvement that is made upon them. This complaint can only be obviated by "long leases at a fixed rent," which convey a large portion of the interest to those who actually conduct the cultivation. The same objection is applicable to the holding of lands by foreign proprietors, and in some degree to estates of too great extent being placed in the same hands.

III. Beside the *production* of provision, there remains to be considered the DISTRIBUTION.—It is in vain that provisions abound in the country, unless I be able to obtain a share of them. This reflection belongs to every individual. The plenty of provision produced, the quantity of public stock, affords subsistence to individuals, and encouragement to the formation of families, only in proportion as it is *distributed*, that is, in proportion as these individuals are allowed to draw from it a supply of their own wants. The *distribution*, therefore, becomes of equal consequence to population with the *production*. Now there is but one principle of distribution that can ever become universal, namely, the principle "of exchange;" or, in other words, that every man have something to give in return for what he wants. Bounty, however it may come in aid of another principle, however it may occasionally qualify the rigour, or supply the imperfection, of an established rule of distribution, can never itself become that rule or principle; because men will not work to give the produce of their labour away. Moreover, the only equivalents that can be offered in exchange for provision are *power* and *labour*. All property is *power*. What we call property in land, is the power to use it, and to exclude others from the use. Money is the representative of *power*, because it is convertible into power: the value of it consists in its faculty of procuring *power* over things and persons. But *power* which results from civil conventions (and of this kind is what we call a man's fortune or estate), is necessarily confined to a few, and is withal soon exhausted; whereas the capacity of *labour* is every man's natural possession, and composes a constant and renewing fund. The hire, therefore, or produce of personal industry, is that which the bulk of every community must bring to market, in exchange for the means of subsistence; in other words, employment must, in every country, be the medium of distribution, and the source of supply to individuals. But when we consider the *production* and *distribution* of provision, as distinct from, and independent of, each other; when, supposing the same quantity to be produced, we inquire in what way, or according to what rule, it may be *distributed;* we are led to a conception of the subject not at all agreeable to truth and reality: for, in truth and reality, though provision must be produced before it be distributed, yet the production depends, in a great measure, upon the distribution. The quantity of provision raised out of the ground, so far as the raising of it requires human art or labour, will evidently be regulated by the demand: the demand, or, in other words, the price and sale, being that which alone rewards the care, or excites the diligence, of the husbandman. But the sale of provision depends upon the number, not of those who want, but of those who have something to offer in return for what they want; not of those who would consume, but of those who can buy; that is,

upon the number of those who have the fruits of some other kind of industry to tender in exchange for what they stand in need of from the production of the soil.

We see, therefore, the connexion between population and *employment*. Employment affects population "directly," as it affords the only medium of distribution by which individuals can obtain from the common stock a supply for the wants of their families: it affects population "indirectly," as it augments the stock itself of provision, in the only way by which the production of it can be effectually encouraged,—by furnishing purchasers. No man can purchase without an equivalent; and that equivalent, by the generality of the people, must in every country be derived from employment.

And upon this basis is founded the public benefit of *trade*, that is to say, its subserviency to population, in which its only real utility consists. Of that industry, and of those arts and branches of trade, which are employed in the production, conveyance, and preparation, of any principal species of human food, as of the business of the husbandman, the butcher, baker, brewer, corn-merchant, &c. we acknowledge the necessity: likewise of those manufactures which furnish us with warm clothing, convenient habitations, domestic utensils, as of the weaver, tailor, smith, carpenter, &c. we perceive (in climates, however, like ours, removed at a distance from the sun) the conduciveness to population, by their rendering human life more healthy, vigorous, and comfortable. But not one half of the occupations which compose the trade of Europe, fall within either of these descriptions. Perhaps two-thirds of the manufacturers in England are employed upon articles of confessed luxury, ornament, or splendour; in the superfluous embellishment of some articles which are useful in their kind, or upon others which have no conceivable use or value but what is founded in caprice or fashion. What can be less necessary, or less connected with the sustentation of human life, than the whole produce of the silk, lace, and plate manufactory? yet what multitudes labour in the different branches of these arts! What can be imagined more capricious than the fondness for tobacco and snuff? yet how many various occupations, and how many thousands in each, are set at work in administering to this frivolous gratification! Concerning trades of this kind (and this kind comprehends more than half of the trades that are exercised), it may fairly be asked, "How, since they add nothing to the stock of provision, do they tend to increase the number of the people?" We are taught to say of trade, "that it maintains multitudes:" but by what means does it *maintain* them, when it produces nothing upon which the support of human life depends?—In like manner with respect to foreign commerce; of that merchandise which brings the necessaries of life into a country, which imports, for example, corn, or cattle, or cloth, or fuel, we allow the tendency to advance population, because it increases the stock of provision by which the people are subsisted. But this effect of foreign commerce is so little seen in our own country, that, I believe, it may be affirmed of Great Britain, what Bishop Berkeley said of a neighbouring island, that, if it were encompassed with a wall of brass fifty cubits high, the country might maintain the same number of inhabitants that find subsistence in it at present; and that every necessary, and even every real comfort and ac-

commodation, of human life, might be supplied in as great abundance as they now are. Here, therefore, as before, we may fairly ask, by what operation it is, that foreign commerce, which brings into the country no one article of human subsistence, promotes the multiplication of human life?

The answer of this inquiry will be contained in the discussion of another, *viz.*

Since the soil will maintain many more than it can employ, what must be done, supposing the country to be full, with the remainder of the inhabitants? They who, by the rules of partition (and some such must be established in every country), are entitled to the land; and they who, by their labour upon the soil, acquire a right in its produce, will not part with their property for nothing; or, rather, they will no longer raise from the soil what they can neither use themselves, nor exchange for what they want. Or, lastly, if these were willing to distribute what they could spare of the provision which the ground yielded, to others who had no share or concern in the property or cultivation of it, yet still the most enormous mischiefs would ensue from great numbers remaining unemployed. The idleness of one half of the community would overwhelm the whole with confusion and disorder. One only way presents itself of removing the difficulty which this question states, and which is simply this; that they, whose work is not wanted, nor can be employed, in the raising of provision out of the ground, convert their hands and ingenuity to the fabrication of articles which may gratify and requite those who are so employed, or who, by the division of lands in the country, are entitled to the exclusive possession of certain parts of them. By this contrivance, all things proceed well. The occupier of the ground raises from it the utmost that he can procure, because he is repaid for what he can spare by something else which he wants, or with which he is pleased: the artist or manufacturer, though he have neither any property in the soil, nor any concern in its cultivation, is regularly supplied with the produce, because he gives, in exchange for what he stands in need of, something upon which the receiver places an equal value: and the community is kept quiet, while both sides are engaged in their respective occupations.

It appears, then, that the business of one half of mankind is, to set the other half at work; that is, to provide articles which, by tempting the desires, may stimulate the industry, and call forth the activity, of those upon the exertion of whose industry, and the application of whose faculties, the production of human provision depends. A certain portion only of human labour is, or can be, *productive;* the rest is *instrumental;*—both equally necessary, though the one have no other object than to excite the other. It appears also, that it signifies nothing, as to the main purpose of trade, how superfluous the articles which it furnishes are; whether the want of them be real or imaginary; whether it be founded in nature or in opinion, in fashion, habit, or emulation: it is enough that they be actually desired and sought after. Flourishing cities are raised and supported by trading in tobacco; populous towns subsist by the manufactory of ribands. A watch may be a very unnecessary appendage to the dress of a peasant; yet if the peasant will till the ground in order to obtain a watch, the true design of trade is answered; and the watch-maker, while he polishes the case,

or files the wheels, of his machine, is contributing to the production of corn as effectually, though not so directly, as if he handled the spade or held the plough. The use of tobacco has been mentioned already, not only as an acknowledged superfluity, but as affording a remarkable example of the caprice of human appetite: yet, if the fisherman will ply his nets, or the mariner fetch rice from foreign countries, in order to procure to himself this indulgence, the market is supplied with two important articles of provision, by the instrumentality of a merchandise which has no other apparent use than the gratification of a vitiated palate.

But it may come to pass that the husbandman, land-owner, or whoever he be that is entitled to the produce of the soil, will no longer exchange it for what the manufacturer has to offer. He is already supplied to the extent of his desires. For instance, he wants no more cloth; he will no longer therefore give the weaver corn in return for the produce of his looms: but he would readily give it for tea, or for wine. When the weaver finds this to be the case, he has nothing to do but to send his cloth abroad, in exchange for tea or for wine, which he may barter for that provision which the offer of his cloth will no longer procure. The circulation is thus revived: and the benefit of the discovery is, that, whereas the number of weavers, who could find subsistence from their employment, was before limited by the consumption of cloth in the country, that number is now augmented, in proportion to the demand for tea and wine. This is the principle of *foreign* commerce. In the magnitude and complexity of the machine, the principle of motion is sometimes lost or unobserved: but it is always simple and the same, to whatever extent it may be diversified and enlarged in its operation.

The effect of trade upon agriculture, the process of which we have been endeavouring to describe, is visible in the neighbourhood of trading towns, and in those districts which carry on a communication with the markets of trading towns. The husbandmen are busy and skilful; the peasantry laborious; the land is managed to the best advantage; and double the quantity of corn or herbage (articles which are ultimately converted into human provision) raised from it, of what the same soil yields in remoter and more neglected parts of the country. Wherever a thriving manufactory finds means to establish itself, a new vegetation springs up around it. I believe it is true that agriculture never arrives at any considerable, much less at its highest, degree of perfection, where it is not connected with trade, that is, where the demand for the produce is not increased by the consumption of trading cities.

Let it be remembered then, that agriculture is the immediate source of human provision; that trade conduces to the production of provision only as it promotes agriculture; that the whole system of commerce vast and various as it is, hath no other public importance than its subserviency to this end

We return to the proposition we laid down, "that employment universally promotes population." From this proposition it follows, that the comparative utility of different branches of national commerce is measured by the number which each branch *employs*. Upon which principle a scale may easily be constructed, which shall assign to the

several kinds and divisions of foreign trade their respective degrees of public importance. In this scale, the *first* place belongs to the exchange of wrought goods for raw materials, as of broad-cloth for raw silk; cutlery for wool; clocks or watches for iron, flax, or furs; because this traffic provides a market for the labour that has already been expended, at the same time that it supplies materials for new industry. Population always flourishes where this species of commerce obtains to any considerable degree. It is the cause of employment, or the certain indication. As it takes off the manufactures of the country, it promotes employment; as it brings in raw materials, it supposes the existence of manufactories in the country, and a demand for the article when manufactured. The *second* place is due to that commerce, which barters one species of wrought goods for another, as stuffs for calicoes, fustians for cambrics, leather for paper, or wrought goods for articles which require no farther preparation, as for wine, oil, tea, sugar, &c. This also assists employment; because, when the country is stocked with one kind of manufacture, it renews the demand by converting it into another: but it is inferior to the former, as it promotes this end by one side only of the bargain,—by what it carries out.—The *last*, the lowest, and most disadvantageous species of commerce, is the exportation of raw materials in return for wrought goods: as when wool is sent abroad to purchase velvets; hides or peltry, to procure shoes, hats, or linen cloth. This trade is unfavourable to population, because it leaves no room or demand for employment, either in what it takes out of the country, or in what it brings into it. Its operation on both sides is noxious. By its exports, it diminishes the very subject upon which the industry of the inhabitants ought to be exercised; by its imports, it lessens the encouragement of that industry, in the same proportion that it supplies the consumption of the country with the produce of foreign labour. Of different branches of *manufactory*, those are, in their nature, the most beneficial, in which the price of the wrought article exceeds in the highest proportion that of the raw material: for this excess measures the quantity of employment, or, in other words, the number of manufacturers which each branch sustains. The produce of the ground is never the most advantageous article of foreign commerce. Under a perfect state of public economy, the soil of the country should be applied solely to the raising of provisions for the inhabitants, and its trade be supplied by their industry. A nation will never reach its proper extent of population, so long as its principal commerce consists in the exportation of corn or cattle, or even of wine, oil, tobacco, madder, indigo, timber; because these last articles take up that surface which ought to be covered with the materials of human subsistence.

It must be here however noticed, that we have all along considered the inhabitants of a country as maintained by the produce of the country; and that what we have said is applicable with strictness to this supposition alone. The reasoning, nevertheless, may easily be adapted to a different case: for when provision is not produced, but *imported*, what has been affirmed concerning provision, will be, in a great measure, true of that article, whether it be money, produce, or *labour*, which is exchanged for provision. Thus, when the Dutch

raise madder, and exchange it for corn; or, when the people of America plant tobacco, and send it to Europe for cloth; the cultivation of madder and tobacco becomes as necessary to the subsistence of the inhabitants, and by consequence will affect the state of population in these countries as sensibly, as the actual production of food, or the manufactory of raiment. In like manner, when the same inhabitants of Holland earn money by the carriage of the produce of one country to another, and with that money purchase the provision from abroad which their own land is not extensive enough to supply, the increase or decline of this carrying trade will influence the numbers of the people no less than similar changes would do in the cultivation of the soil.

The few principles already established will enable us to describe the effects upon population, which may be expected from the following important articles of national conduct and economy:

I. Emigration.—*Emigration* may be either the overflowing of a country, or the desertion. As the increase of the species is indefinite; and the number of inhabitants which any given tract or surface can support, finite; it is evident that great numbers may be constantly leaving a country, and yet the country remain constantly full. Or, whatever be the cause which invincibly limits the population of a country; when the number of the people has arrived at that limit, the progress of generation, beside continuing the succession, will supply multitudes for foreign emigration. In these two cases, emigration neither indicates any political decay, nor in truth diminishes the number of the people; nor ought to be prohibited or discouraged. But emigrants may relinquish their country, from a sense of insecurity, oppression, annoyance, and inconveniency. Neither, again, *here* is it emigration which wastes the people, but the evils that occasion it. It would be in vain, if it were practicable, to confine the inhabitants at home; for the same causes which drive them out of the country would prevent their multiplication if they remained in it. Lastly; men may be tempted to change their situation by the allurement of a better climate, of a more refined or luxurious manner of living; by the prospect of wealth; or, sometimes, by the mere nominal advantage of higher wages and prices. This class of emigrants, with whom alone the laws can interfere with effect, will never, I think, be numerous. With the generality of a people, the attachment of mankind to their homes and country, the irksomeness of seeking new habitations, and of living amongst strangers, will outweigh, so long as men possess the necessaries of life in safety, or at least so long as they can obtain a provision for that mode of subsistence which the class of citizens to which they belong are accustomed to enjoy, all the inducements that the advantages of a foreign land can offer. There appear, therefore, to be few cases in which emigration can be prohibited, with advantage to the state; it appears also that emigration is an equivocal symptom, which will probably accompany the decline of the political body, but which *may* likewise attend a condition of perfect health and vigour.

II. Colonization.—The only view under which our subject will permit us to consider *colonization*, is in its tendency to augment the population of the parent state.—Suppose a fertile, but empty island

to lie within the reach of a country in which arts and manufactures are already established; suppose a colony sent out from such a country, to take possession of the island, and to live there under the protection and authority of their native government: the new settlers will naturally convert their labour to the cultivation of the vacant soil, and with the produce of that soil will draw a supply of manufactures from home. Whilst the inhabitants continue few, and lands cheap and fresh, the colonists will find it easier and more profitable to raise corn or rear cattle, and with corn and cattle to purchase woollen cloth, for instance, or linen, than to spin or weave these articles for themselves. The mother country, meanwhile, derives from this connexion an increase both of provision and employment. It promotes at once the two great requisites upon which the facility of subsistence, and by consequence the state of population, depend,—*production* and *distribution*; and this in a manner the most direct and beneficial. No situation can be imagined more favourable to population, than that of a country which works up goods for others, whilst these others are cultivating new tracts of land for them: for as, in a genial climate, and from a fresh soil, the labour of one man will raise provision enough for ten, it is manifest that where all are employed in agriculture, much the greater part of the produce will be spared from the consumption; and that three out of four, at the least of those who are maintained by it, will reside in the country which receives the redundancy. When the new country does not remit *provision* to the old one, the advantage is less; but still the exportation of wrought goods, by whatever return they are paid for, advances population in that secondary way, in which those trades promote it that are not employed in the production of provision. Whatever prejudice therefore some late events have excited against schemes of colonization, the system itself is founded in apparent national utility: and what is more, upon principles favourable to the common interest of human nature: for it does not appear by what other method newly-discovered and unfrequented countries can be peopled, or during the infancy of their establishment be protected or supplied. The error which we of this nation at present lament, seems to have consisted not so much in the original formation of colonies, as in the subsequent management; in imposing restrictions too rigorous or in continuing them too long; in not perceiving the point of time when the irresistible order and progress of human affairs demand a change of laws and policy.

III. Money.—Where *money* abounds, the people are generally numerous: yet gold and silver neither feed nor clothe mankind; nor are they in all countries converted into provision by purchasing the necessaries of life at foreign markets; nor do they in any country, compose those articles of personal or domestic ornament which certain orders of the community have learnt to regard as necessaries of life and without the means of procuring which they will not enter into family establishments:—at least, this property of the precious metals obtains in a very small degree. The effect of money upon the number of the people, though visible to observation, is not explained without some difficulty. To understand this connexion properly we must return to the proposition with which we concluded our reasoning upon the subject; "that population is chiefly promoted by employment."

Now of employment, money is partly the indication, and partly the cause. The only way in which money regularly and spontaneously *flows into* a country, is in return for the goods that are sent out of it, or the work that is performed by it; and the only way in which money is *retained in* a country, is by the country's supplying, in a great measure, its own consumption of manufactures. Consequently, the quantity of money found in a country, denotes the amount of labour and employment; but still, employment, not money, is the cause of population; the accumulation of money being merely a collateral effect of the same cause, or a circumstance which accompanies the existence, and measures the operation, of that cause. And this is true of money, only whilst it is acquired by the industry of the inhabitants. The treasures which belong to a country by the possession of mines, or by the exaction of tribute from foreign dependencies, afford no conclusion concerning the state of population. The influx from these sources may be immense; yet the country may be poor and ill-peopled; of which we see an egregious example in the condition of Spain, since the acquisition of its South-American dominions.

But, secondly, money may become also a real and an operative *cause* of population, by acting as a stimulus to industry, and by facilitating the means of subsistence. The ease of subsistence, and the encouragement of industry, depend neither upon the price of labour, nor upon the price of provision, but upon the proportion which one bears to the other. Now the influx of money into a country, naturally tends to advance this proportion; that is, every fresh accession of money raises the price of labour before it raises the price of provision. When money is brought from abroad, the persons, be they who they will, into whose hands it first arrives, do not buy up provisions with it, but apply it to the purchase and payment of labour. If the state receives it, the state dispenses what it receives amongst soldiers, sailors, artificers, engineers, shipwrights, workmen;—if private persons bring home treasures of gold and silver, they usually expend them in the building of houses, the improvement of estates, the purchase of furniture, dress, equipage, in articles of luxury or splendour;—if the merchant be enriched by returns of his foreign commerce, he applies his increased capital to the enlargement of his business at home. The money ere long comes to market for provision; but it comes thither through the hands of the manufacturer, the artist, the husbandman, and labourer. Its effect, therefore, upon the price of art and labour, will *precede* its effect upon the price of provision; and during the interval between one effect and the other, the means of subsistence will be multiplied and facilitated, as well as industry be excited by new rewards. When the greater plenty of money in circulation has produced an advance in the price of provision, corresponding to the advanced price of labour, its effect ceases. The labourer no longer gains any thing by the increase of his wages. It is not, therefore, the quantity of specie collected into a country, but the continual increase of that quantity, from which the advantage arises to employment and population. It is only the *accession* of money which produces the effect, and it is only by money constantly flowing into a country that the effect can be constant. Now whatever consequence arises to the country from the influx of money, the contrary may be expected to follow from the diminution of its

quantity, and accordingly we find, that whatever cause drains off the specie of a country, faster than the streams which feed it can supply, not only impoverishes the country, but depopulates it. The knowledge and experience of this effect have given occasion to a phrase which occurs in almost every discourse upon commerce or politics. The *balance of trade* with any foreign nation is said to be against or in favour of a country, simply as it tends to carry money out, or bring it in; that is, according as the price of the imports exceeds or falls short of the price of the exports: so invariably is the increase or diminution of the specie of a country regarded as a test of the public advantage or detriment which arises from any branch of its commerce.

IV. TAXATION.—As *taxes* take nothing out of a country; as they do not diminish the public stock, only vary the distribution of it: they are not necessarily prejudicial to population. If the state exact money from certain members of the community, she dispenses it also amongst other members of the same community. They who contribute to the revenue, and they who are supported or benefited by the expenses of government, are to be placed one against the other; and whilst what the subsistence of one part is profited by receiving, compensates for what that of the other suffers by paying, the common fund of the society is not lessened. This is true: but it must be observed, that although the sum distributed by the state be always *equal* to the sum collected from the people, yet the gain and loss to the means of subsistence may be very *unequal*; and the balance will remain on the wrong or the right side of the account, according as the money passes by taxation from the industrious to the idle, from the many to the few, from those who want to those who abound, or in a contrary direction. For instance: a tax upon coaches, to be laid out in the repair of roads, would probably improve the population of a neighbourhood; a tax upon cottages, to be ultimately expended in the purchase and support of coaches, would certainly diminish it. In like manner, a tax upon wine or tea, distributed in bounties to fishermen or husbandmen, would augment the provision of a country; a tax upon fisheries and husbandry, however indirect or concealed, to be converted, when raised, to the procuring of wine or tea for the idle and opulent, would naturally impair the public stock. The effect, therefore, of taxes, upon the means of subsistence, depends not so much upon the amount of the sum levied, as upon the object of the tax and the application. Taxes likewise may be so adjusted as to conduce to the restraint of luxury, and the correction of vice; to the encouragement of industry, trade, agriculture, and marriage. Taxes thus contrived, become rewards and penalties; not only sources of revenue, but instruments of police. Vices indeed themselves cannot be taxed, without holding forth such a conditional toleration of them as to destroy men's perception of their guilt; a tax comes to be considered as a commutation: the materials, however, and incentives of vice may. Although, for instance, drunkenness would be, on this account, an unfit object of taxation, yet public houses and spirituous liquors are very properly subjected to heavy imposts.

Nevertheless, although it may be true that taxes cannot be pronounced to be detrimental to population, by any absolute necessity *in* their nature; and though, under some modifications, and when

urged only to a certain extent, they may even operate in favour of it; yet it will be found, in a great plurality of instances, that their tendency is noxious. Let it be supposed that nine families inhabit a neighbourhood, each possessing barely the means of subsistence, or of that mode of subsistence which custom hath established amongst them; let a tenth family be quartered upon these, to be supported by a tax raised from the nine; or rather, let one of the nine have his income augmented by a similar deduction from the incomes of the rest; in either of these cases, it is evident that the whole district would be broken up: for as the entire income of each is supposed to be barely sufficient for the stablishment which it maintains, a deduction of any part destroys that establishment. Now it is no answer to this objection, it is no apology for the grievance, to say, that nothing is taken out of the neighbourhood; that the stock is not diminished: the mischief is done by deranging the distribution. Nor, again, is the luxury of one family, or even the maintenance of an additional family, a recompense to the country for the ruin of nine others. Nor, lastly, will it alter the effect, though it may conceal the cause, that the contribution, instead of being levied directly upon each day's wages, is mixed up in the price of some article of constant use and consumption, as in a tax upon candles, malt, leather, or fuel. This example illustrates the tendency of taxes to obstruct subsistence; and the minutest degree of this obstruction will be felt in the formation of families. The example, indeed, forms an extreme case; the evil is magnified, in order to render its operation distinct and visible. In real life, families may not be broken up, or forced from their habitations, houses be quitted, or countries suddenly deserted, in consequence of any new imposition whatever; but marriages will become gradually less frequent.

It seems necessary, however, to distinguish between the operation of a new tax, and the effect of taxes which have been long established. In the course of circulation, the money may flow back to the hands from which it was taken. The proportion between the supply and the expense of subsistence, which had been disturbed by the tax, may at length recover itself again. In the instance just now stated, the addition of a tenth family to the neighbourhood, or the enlarged expenses of one of the nine, may, in some shape or other, so advance the profits, or increase the employment, of the rest, as to make full restitution for the share of their property of which it deprives them; or, what is more likely to happen, a reduction may take place in their mode of living, suited to the abridgment of their incomes. Yet still the ultimate and permanent effect of taxation, though distinguishable from the impression of a new tax, is generally adverse to population. The *proportion* above spoken of, can only be restored by one side or other of the following alternative: by the people either contracting their wants, which at the same time diminishes consumption and employment; or by raising the price of labour, which necessarily adding to the price of the productions and manufactures of the country, checks their sale at foreign markets. A nation which is burdened with taxes, must always be undersold by a nation which is free from them, unless the difference be made up by some singular advantage of climate, soil, skill, or industry. This quality belongs to all taxes which affect

the mass of the community, even when imposed upon the properest objects, and applied to the fairest purposes. But abuses are inseparable from the disposal of public money. As governments are usually administered, the produce of public taxes is expended upon a train of gentry, in the maintaining of pomp, or in the purchase of influence. The conversion of property which taxes effectuate, when they are employed in this manner, is attended with obvious evils. It takes from the industrious to give to the idle; it increases the number of the latter; it tends to accumulation; it sacrifices the conveniency of many to the luxury of a few; it makes no return to the people, from whom the tax is drawn, that is satisfactory or intelligible; it encourages no activity which is useful or productive.

The sum to be raised being settled, a wise statesman will contrive his taxes principally with a view to their effect upon *population*; that is, he will so adjust them as to give the least possible obstruction to those means of subsistence by which the mass of the community is maintained. We are accustomed to an opinion, that a tax, to be just, ought to be accurately proportioned to the circumstances of the persons who pay it. But upon what, it might be asked, is this opinion founded; unless it could be shewn that such a proportion interferes the least with the general conveniency of subsistence? Whereas I should rather believe, that a tax constructed with a view to that conveniency ought to rise upon the different classes of the community, in a much higher ratio than the simple proportion of their incomes. The point to be regarded is, not what men have, but what they can spare; and it is evident that a man who possesses a thousand pounds a year, can more easily give up a hundred, than a man with a hundred pounds a year can part with ten; that is, those habits of life which are reasonable and innocent, and upon the ability to continue which the formation of families depends, will be much less affected by one deduction than the other: it is still more evident, that a man with a hundred pounds a year would not be so much distressed in his subsistence, by a demand from him of ten pounds, as a man of ten pounds a year would be by the loss of one: to which we must add, that the population of every country being replenished by the marriages of the lowest ranks of the society, their accommodation and relief become of more importance to the state, than the conveniency of any higher but less numerous order of its citizens. But whatever be the proportion which public expediency directs, whether the simple, the duplicate, or any higher or intermediate, proportion of men's incomes, it can never be attained by any *single* tax: as no single object of taxation can be found, which measures the ability of the subject with sufficient generality and exactness. It is only by a system and variety of taxes mutually balancing and equalizing one another, that a due proportion can be preserved. For instance: if a tax upon lands press with greater hardship upon those who live in the country, it may be properly counterpoised by a tax upon the rent of houses, which will affect principally the inhabitants of large towns. Distinctions may also be framed in some taxes, which shall allow abatements or exemptions to married persons; to the parents of a certain number of legitimate children; to improvers of the soil; to particular modes of cultivation; *as to* tillage in preference to pasturage; and in general to that industry

which is immediately *productive*, in preference to that which is only *instrumental*; but above all, which may leave the heaviest part of the burden upon the methods, whatever they be, of acquiring wealth without industry, or even of subsisting in idleness.

V. EXPORTATION OF BREAD-CORN.—Nothing seems to have a more positive tendency to reduce the number of the people, than the sending abroad part of the provision by which they are maintained; yet this has been the policy of legislators very studious of the improvement of their country. In order to reconcile ourselves to a practice which appears to militate with the chief interest, that is, with the population, of the country that adopts it, we must be reminded of a maxim which belongs to the productions both of nature and art, "that it is impossible to have enough without a superfluity." The point of sufficiency cannot, in any case, be so exactly hit upon, as to have nothing to spare, yet never to want. This is peculiarly true of bread-corn, of which the annual increase is extremely variable. As it is necessary that the crop be adequate to the consumption in a year of scarcity, it must, of consequence, greatly exceed it in a year of plenty. A redundancy therefore will occasionally arise from the very care that is taken to secure the people against the danger of want: and it is manifest that the exportation of this redundancy subtracts nothing from the number that can regularly be maintained by the produce of the soil. Moreover, as the exportation of corn, under these circumstances, is attended with no direct injury to population, so the benefits which indirectly arise to population from foreign commerce, belong to this, in common with other species of trade; together with the peculiar advantage of presenting a constant incitement to the skill and industry of the husbandman, by the promise of a certain sale and an adequate price, under every contingency of season and produce. There is another situation, in which corn may not only be exported, but in which the people can thrive by no other means; that is of a newly settled country with a fertile soil. The exportation of a large proportion of the corn which a country produces, proves, it is true, that the inhabitants have not yet attained to the number which the country is capable of maintaining; but it does not prove but that they may be hastening to this limit with the utmost practicable celerity, which is the perfection to be sought for in a young establishment. In all cases except these two, and in the former of them to any greater degree than what is necessary to take off occasional redundancies, the exportation of corn is either itself noxious to population, or argues a defect of population arising from some other cause.

VI.—ABRIDGMENT OF LABOUR.—It has long been made a question, whether those mechanical contrivances which *abridge labour*, by performing the same work by fewer hands, be detrimental or not to the population of a country. From what has been delivered in preceding parts of the present chapter, it will be evident that this question is equivalent to another,—whether such contrivances diminish or not the quantity of employment. Their first and most obvious effect undoubtedly is this; because, if one man be made to do what three men did before, two are immediately discharged: but if, by some more general and remoter consequence, they increase the demand for work, or, what is the same thing, prevent the diminution of that demand, in a greater proportion

than they contract the number of hands by which it is performed, the quantity of employment, upon the whole, will gain an addition. Upon which principle it may be observed, first, that whenever a mechanical invention succeeds in one place, it is necessary that it be imitated in every other where the same manufacture is carried on: for, it is manifest that he who has the benefit of a conciser operation, will soon outvie and undersell a competitor who continues to use a more circuitous labour. It is also true, in the second place, that whoever *first* discover or adopt a mechanical improvement, will, for some time, draw to themselves an increase of employment: and that this preference may continue even after the improvement has become general; for, in every kind of trade, it is not only a great but permanent advantage, to have once preoccupied the public reputation. Thirdly, after every superiority which might be derived from the possession of a secret has ceased, it may be well questioned whether even then any loss can accrue to employment. The same money will be spared to the same article still. Wherefore, in proportion as the article can be afforded at a lower price, by reason of an easier or shorter process in the manufacture, it will either grow into more general use, or an improvement will take place in the quality and fabric, which will demand a proportionable addition of hands. The number of persons employed in the manufactory of stockings has not, I apprehend, decreased since the invention of stocking mills. The amount of what is expended upon the article, after subtracting from it the price of the raw material, and consequently what is paid for work in this branch of our manufactories, is not less than it was before. Goods of a finer texture are worn in the place of coarser. This is the change which the invention has produced; and which compensates to the manufactory for every other inconveniency. Add to which, that in the above, and in almost every instance, an improvement which conduces to the recommendation of a manufactory, either by the cheapness or the quality of the goods, draws up after it many dependant employments, in which no abbreviation has taken place.

From the reasoning that has been pursued, and the various considerations suggested in this chapter, a judgment may, in some sort, be formed, how far regulations of law are in their nature capable of contributing to the support and advancement of population. I say, *how far*: for as in many subjects, so especially in those which relate to commerce, to plenty, to riches, and to the number of people, more is wont to be expected from laws, than laws can do. Laws can only imperfectly restrain that dissolutenes of manners, which, by diminishing the frequency of marriages, impairs the very source of population. Laws cannot regulate the wants of mankind, their mode of living, or their desire of those superfluities which fashion, more irresistible than laws, has once introduced into general usage; or, in other words, has erected into necessaries of life. Laws cannot induce men to enter into marriages, when the expenses of a family must deprive them of that system of accommodation to which they have habituated their expectations. Laws, by their protection, by assuring to the la-

bourer the fruit and profit of his labour, may help to make a people industrious; but, without industry, the laws cannot provide either subsistence or employment; laws cannot make corn grow without toil and care, or trade flourish without art and diligence. In spite of all laws, the expert, laborious, honest workmen will be *employed*, in preference to the lazy, the unskilful, the fraudulent, and evasive: and this is not the more true of two inhabitants of the same village, than it is of the people of two different countries, which communicate either with each other or with the rest of the world. The natural basis of trade is rivalship of quality and price; or, which is the same thing, of skill and industry. Every attempt to *force* trade by operation of law, that is, by compelling persons to buy goods at one market, which they can obtain cheaper and better from another, is sure to be either eluded by the quick-sightedness and incessant activity of private interest, or to be frustrated by retaliation. One half of the commercial laws of many states are calculated merely to counteract the restrictions which have been imposed by other states. Perhaps the only way in which the interposition of law is salutary in trade, is in the prevention of frauds.

Next to the indispensable requisites of internal peace and security, the chief advantage which can be derived to population from the interference of law, appears to me to consist in the encouragement of *agriculture*. This, at least, is the direct way of increasing the number of the people, every other mode being effectual only by its influence upon this. Now the principal expedient by which such a purpose can be promoted, is to adjust the laws of property, as nearly as possible, to the two following rules; first, "to give to the occupier all the power over the soil which is necessary for its perfect cultivation;"—secondly, "to assign the whole profit of every improvement to the persons by whose activity it is carried on." What we call property in land, as hath been observed above, is power over it. Now it is indifferent to the public in whose hands this power resides, if it be rightly used; it matters not to whom the land belongs, if it be well cultivated. When we lament that great estates are often united in the same hand, or complain that one man possesses what would be sufficient for a thousand, we suffer ourselves to be misled by words. The owner of ten thousand pounds a year, *consumes* little more of the produce of the soil than the owner of ten pounds a-year. If the cultivation be equal, the estate, in the hands of one great lord, affords subsistence and employment to the same number of persons as it would do if it were divided amongst a hundred proprietors. In like manner we ought to judge of the effect upon the public interest, which may arise from lands being holden by the king, or by the subject; by private persons, or by corporations; by laymen, or ecclesiastics; in fee, or for life; by virtue of office, or in right of inheritance. I do not mean that these varieties make no difference, but I mean that all the difference they do make respects the cultivation of the lands which are so holden.

There exist in this country conditions of tenure which condemn the land itself to perpetual sterility. Of this kind is the right of *common*, which precludes each proprietor from the improvement, or even the convenient occupation, of his estate, without (what seldom can be obtained) the consent of many others. This tenure is also usually

[illegible] by the interference of [illegible] claims, under which, it often happens that the surface belongs to one owner, and the soil to another; so that neither owner can stir a clod without the concurrence of his partner in the property. In many manors, the tenant is restrained from granting leases beyond a short term of years, which renders every plan of solid improvement impracticable. In these cases, the owner wants, what the first rule of rational policy requires, "sufficient power over the soil for its perfect cultivation." This power ought to be extended to him by some easy and general law of enfranchisement, partition, and enclosure: which, though compulsory upon the lord, or the rest of the tenants, whilst it has in view the melioration of the soil, and tenders an equitable compensation for every right that it takes away, is neither more arbitrary, nor more dangerous to the stability of property, than that which is done in the construction of roads, bridges, embankments, navigable canals, and indeed in almost every public work, in which private owners of land are obliged to accept that price for their property which an indifferent jury may award. It may here, however, be proper to observe, that although the enclosure of wastes and pastures be generally beneficial to population, yet the enclosure of lands in tillage, in order to convert them into pastures, is as generally hurtful.

But, secondly, agriculture is discouraged by every constitution of landed property which lets in those, who have no concern in the improvement, to a participation of the profit. This objection is applicable to all such customs of manors as subject the proprietor, upon the death of the lord or tenant, or the alienation of the estate, to a fine apportioned to the improved value of the land. But of all institutions which are in this way adverse to cultivation and improvement, none is so noxious as that of *tithes*. A claimant here enters into the produce, who contributed no assistance whatever to the production. When years, perhaps, of care and toil have matured an improvement; when the husbandman sees new crops ripening to his skill and industry; the moment he is ready to put his sickle to the grain, he finds himself compelled to divide his harvest with a stranger. Tithes are a tax not only upon industry, but upon that industry which feeds mankind; upon that species of exertion which it is the aim of all wise laws to cherish and promote; and to uphold and excite which, composes, as we have seen, the main benefit that the community receives from the whole system of trade, and the success of commerce. And, together with the more general inconveniency that attends the exaction of tithes, there is this additional evil, in the mode at least according to which they are collected at present, that they operate as a bounty upon pasturage. The burden of the tax falls with its chief, if not with its whole weight, upon tillage: that is to say, upon that precise mode of cultivation which, as hath been shewn above, it is the business of the state to relieve and remunerate, in preference to every other. No measure of such extensive concern appears to me so practicable, nor any single alteration so beneficial, as the conversion of tithes into corn-rents. This commutation, I am convinced, might be so adjusted, as to secure to the tithe-holder a complete and perpetual equivalent for his interest, and to leave to industry its full operation, and entire reward.

CHAPTER XII.

Of war, and of military establishments.

BECAUSE the Christian Scriptures describe wars as what they are, —as crimes or judgments, some have been led to believe that it is unlawful for a Christian to bear arms. But it should be remembered, that it may be necessary for individuals to unite their force, and for this end to resign themselves to the direction of a common will; and yet, it may be true that that will is often actuated by criminal motives, and often determined to destructive purposes. Hence, although the origin of wars be ascribed, in Scripture to the operation of lawless and malignant passions;* and though war itself be enumerated among the sorest calamities with which a land can be visited, the profession of a soldier is no where forbidden or condemned. When the soldiers demanded of John the Baptist what they should do, he said unto them, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages."† In which answer we do not find that, in order to prepare themselves for the reception of the kingdom of God, it was required of soldiers to relinquish their profession, but only that they should beware of the vices of which that profession was accused. The precept which follows, "Be content with your wages," supposed them to continue in their situation. It was of a Roman centurion that Christ pronounced that memorable eulogy, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel."‡ The first Gentile convert § who was received into the Christian Church, and to whom the gospel was imparted by the immediate and especial direction of Heaven, held the same station; and in the history of this transaction we discover not the smallest intimation, that Cornelius, upon becoming a Christian, quitted the service of the Roman legion: that his profession was objected to, or his continuance in it considered as in any wise inconsistent with his new character.

In applying the principles of morality to the affairs of nations, the difficulty which meets us arises from hence, "that the particular consequence sometimes appears to exceed the value of the general rule." In this circumstance is founded the only distinction that exists between the case of independent states, and of independent individuals. In the transactions of private persons, no advantage that results from the breach of a general law of justice, can compensate to the public for the violation of the law; in the concerns of empire, this may sometimes be doubted. Thus, that the faith of promises ought to be maintained, as far as is lawful, and as far as was intended by the parties, whatever inconveniency either of them may suffer by his fidelity, in the intercourse of private life, is seldom disputed; because it is evident to almost every man who reflects upon the subject, that the common happiness gains more by the preservation of the rule, than it could do by the removal of the inconveniency. But when the adherence to a public treaty would enslave a whole people; would block up seas, rivers, or harbours; depopulate cities; condemn fertile re-

* James iv. 1. † Luke iii. 14.
‡ Luke vii. 9. § Acts x. 1.

gions to eternal desolation; cut off a country from its sources of provision, or deprive it of those commercial advantages to which its climate, produce, or situation, naturally entitle it: the magnitude of the particular evil induces us to call in question the obligation of the general rule. Moral Philosophy furnishes no precise solution to these doubts. She cannot pronounce that any rule of morality is so rigid as to bend to no exceptions; nor, on the other hand, can she comprise these exceptions within any previous description. She confesses that the obligation of every law depends upon its ultimate utility; that this utility having a finite and determinate value, situations may be feigned, and consequently may possibly arise, in which the general tendency is outweighed by the enormity of the particular mischief: but she recalls, at the same time, to the consideration of the inquirer, the almost inestimable importance, as of other general rules of relative justice, so especially of national and personal fidelity; the unseen, if not unbounded, extent of the mischief which must follow from the want of it; the danger of leaving it to the sufferer to decide upon the comparison of particular and general consequences; and the still greater danger of such decisions being drawn into future precedents. If treaties, for instance, be no longer binding than whilst they are convenient, or until the inconveniency ascend to a certain point (which point must be fixed by the judgment, or rather by the feelings, of the complaining party); or if such an opinion, after being authorized by a few examples, come at length to prevail; one and almost the only method of averting or closing the calamities of war, of either preventing or putting a stop to the destruction of mankind, is lost to the world for ever. We do not say that no evil can exceed this, nor any possible advantage compensate it; but we say that a loss, which affects *all*, will scarcely be made up to the common stock of human happiness by any benefit that can be procured to a single nation, which, however respectable when compared with any other single nation, bears an inconsiderable proportion to the whole. These, however, are the principles upon which the calculation is to be formed. It is enough, in this place, to remark the cause which produces the hesitation that we sometimes feel, in applying rules of personal probity to the conduct of nations.

As between individuals it is found impossible to ascertain every duty by an immediate reference to public utility, not only because such reference is oftentimes too remote for the direction of private consciences, but because a multitude of cases arise in which it is indifferent to the general interest by what rule men act, though it be absolutely necessary that they act by some constant and known rule or other; and as, for these reasons, certain positive constitutions are wont to be established in every society, which, when established, become as obligatory as the original principles of natural justice themselves; so, likewise, it is between independent communities. Together with those maxims of universal equity which are common to states and to individuals, and by which the rights and conduct of the one as well as the other ought to be adjusted, when they fall within the scope and application of such maxims; there exists also amongst sovereigns a system of artificial jurisprudence, under the name of the *law of nations*. In this code are found the rules which

determine the right to vacant or newly-discovered countries; those which relate to the protection of fugitives, the privileges of ambassadors, the condition and duties of neutrality, the immunities of neutral ships, ports, and coasts, the distance from shore to which these immunities extend, the distinction between free and contraband goods, and a variety of subjects of the same kind. Concerning which examples, and indeed the principal part of what is called the *jus gentium*, it may be observed, that the rules derive their moral force (by which I mean the regard that ought to be paid to them by the consciences of sovereigns), not from their internal reasonableness or justice, for many of them are perfectly arbitrary, nor yet from the authority by which they were established, for the greater part have grown insensibly into usage, without any public compact, formal acknowledgment, or even known original; but simply from the fact of their being established, and the general duty of conforming to established rules upon questions, and between parties, where nothing but positive regulations can prevent disputes, and where disputes are followed by such destructive consequences. The first of the instances which we have just now enumerated, may be selected for the illustration of this remark. The nations of Europe consider the sovereignty of newly-discovered countries as belonging to the prince or state whose subject makes the discovery; and, in pursuance of this rule, it is usual for a navigator, who falls upon an unknown shore, to take possession of it, in the name of his sovereign at home, by erecting his standard, or displaying his flag, upon a desert coast. Now nothing can be more fanciful, or less substantiated by any considerations of reason or justice, than the right which such discovery, or the transient occupation and idle ceremony that accompany it, confer upon the country of the discoverer. Nor can any stipulation be produced, by which the rest of the world have bound themselves to submit to this pretension. Yet when we reflect that the claims to newly-discovered countries can hardly be settled, between the different nations which frequent them, without some positive rule or other; that such claims, if left unsettled, would prove sources of ruinous and fatal contentions; that the rule already proposed, however arbitrary, possesses one principal quality of a rule,—determination and certainty; above all, that it is acquiesced in, and that no one has power to substitute another, however he might contrive a better, in its place: when we reflect upon these properties of the rule, or rather upon these consequences of rejecting its authority, we are led to ascribe to it the virtue and obligation of a precept of natural justice, because we perceive in it that which is the foundation of justice itself, —public importance and utility. And a prince who should dispute this rule, for the want of regularity in its formation, or of intelligible justice in its principle, and by such disputes should disturb the tranquillity of nations, and at he same time lay the foundation of future disturbances, would be little less criminal than he who breaks the public peace by a violation of engagements to which he had himself consented, or by an attack upon those national rights which are founded immediately in the law of nature, and in the first perceptions of equity. The same thing may be repeated of the rules which the law of nations prescribes in the other instances that were mentioned, namely, that the obscurity of their origin, or the arbitrariness of their

principle, subtracts nothing from the respect that is due to them, when once established.

War may be considered with a view to its *causes* and to its *conduct*.

The *justifying* causes of war are, deliberate invasions of right, and the necessity of maintaining such a balance of power amongst neighbouring nations, as that no single state, or confederacy of states, be strong enough to overwhelm the rest. The objects of just war are, precaution, defence, or reparation. In a larger sense, every just war is a *defensive* war, inasmuch as every just war supposes an injury perpetrated, attempted, or feared.

The *insufficient* causes or *unjustifiable* motives of war are the family alliances, the personal friendships, or the personal quarrels of princes; the internal disputes which are carried on in other nations; the justice of other wars; the extension of territory, or of trade; the misfortunes or accidental weakness of a neighbouring or rival nation.

There are *two* lessons of rational and sober policy, which, if it were possible to inculcate them into the councils of princes, would exclude many of the motives of war, and allay that restless ambition which is constantly stirring up one part of mankind against another. The first of these lessons admonishes princes to "place their glory and their emulation, not in extent of territory, but in raising the greatest quantity of happiness out of a given territory." The enlargement of territory by conquest is not only not a just object of war, but, in the greater part of the instances in which it is attempted, not even desirable. It is certainly not desirable where it adds nothing to the numbers, the enjoyments, or the security, of the conquerors. What commonly is gained to a nation, by the annexing of new dependencies, or the subjugation of other countries, to its dominion, but a wider frontier to defend; more interfering claims to vindicate; more quarrels, more enemies, more rebellions, to encounter; a greater force to keep up by sea and land; more services to provide for, and more establishments to pay? And, in order to draw from these acquisitions something that may make up for the charge of keeping them, a revenue is to be extorted, or a monopoly to be enforced and watched, at an expense which costs half their produce. Thus the provinces are oppressed, in order to pay for being ill-governed; and the original state is exhausted in maintaining a feeble authority over discontented subjects. No assignable portion of country is benefited by the change; and if the sovereign appear to himself to be enriched or strengthened, when every part of his dominion is made poorer and weaker than it was, it is probable that he is deceived by appearances. Or were it true that the grandeur of the prince is magnified by those exploits; the glory which is purchased, and the ambition which is gratified, by the distress of one country without adding to the happiness of another, which at the same time enslaves the new and impoverishes the ancient part of the empire, by whatever names it may be known or flattered, ought to be an object of universal execration; and oftentimes not more so to the vanquished, than to the very people whose *armies or* whose treasures have achieved the victory.

There are, indeed, two cases in which the extension of territory may be of real advantage, and to both parties. The first is, where an empire thereby reaches to the natural boundaries which divide it from the rest of the world. Thus we account the British Channel the natural boundary which separates the nations of England and France; and if France possessed any countries on this, or England any cities or provinces on that side of the sea, recovery of such towns and districts to what may be called their natural sovereign, though it may not be a just reason for commencing war, would be a proper use to make of victory. The other case is, where neighbouring states, being severally too small and weak to defend themselves against the dangers that surround them, can only be safe by a strict and constant junction of their strength; here conquest will effect the purposes of confederation and alliance; and the union which it produces is often more close and permanent than that which results from voluntary association. Thus, if the heptarchy had continued in England, the different kingdoms of it might have separately fallen a prey to foreign invasion: and although the interest and danger of one part of the island were in truth common to every other part, it might have been difficult to have circulated this persuasion amongst independent nations; or to have united them in any regular or steady opposition to their continental enemies, had not the valour and fortune of an enterprising prince incorporated the whole into a single monarchy. Here the conquered gained as much by the revolution as the conquerors. In like manner, and for the same reason, when the two royal families of Spain were met together in one race of princes, and the several provinces of France had devolved into the possession of a single sovereign, it became unsafe for the inhabitants of Great Britain any longer to remain under separate governments. The union of England and Scotland, which transformed two quarrelsome neighbours into one powerful empire, and which was first brought about by the course of succession, and afterward completed by amicable convention, would have been a fortunate conclusion of hostilities, had it been effected by the operations of war. These two cases being admitted, namely, the obtaining of natural boundaries and barriers, and the including under the same government those who have a common danger and a common enemy to guard against; I know not whether a third can be thought of, in which the extension of empire by conquest is useful even to the conquerors.

The second rule of prudence which ought to be recommended to those who conduct the affairs of nations, is, "never to pursue national *honour* as distinct from national *interest*." This rule acknowledges that it is often necessary to assert the honour of a nation for the sake of its interest. The spirit and courage of a people are supported by flattering their pride. Concessions which betray too much of fear or weakness, though they relate to points of mere ceremony, invite demands and attacks of more serious importance. Our rule allows all this; and only directs that, when points of honour become subjects of contention between sovereigns, or are likely to be made the occasions of war, they be estimated with a reference to utility, and not *by themselves*." "The dignity of his crown, the honour of his flag, the glory of his arms," in the mouth of a prince, are stately and imposing terms; but the ideas they inspire, are insatiable. It may be always glorious

to conquer, whatever be the justice of the war, or the price of the victory. The dignity of a sovereign may not permit him to recede from claims of homage and respect, at whatever expense of national peace and happiness they are to be maintained; however unjust they may have been in their original, or in their continuance however useless to the possessor, or mortifying and vexatious to other states. The pursuit of honour, when set loose from the admonitions of prudence, becomes in kings a wild and romantic passion; eager to engage, and gathering fury in its progress, it is checked by no difficulties, repelled by no dangers; it forgets or despises those considerations of safety, ease, wealth, and plenty, which, in the eye of true public wisdom, compose the objects to which the renown of arms, the fame of victory, are only instrumental and subordinate. The pursuit of interest, on the other hand, is a sober principle; computes costs and consequences; is cautious of entering into war; stops in time: when regulated by those universal maxims of relative justice, which belong to the affairs of communities as well as of private persons, it is the right principle for nations to proceed by; even when it trespasses upon these regulations, it is much less dangerous, because much more temperate, than the other.

II. The conduct of war.—If the cause and end of war be justifiable; all the means that appear necessary to the end, are justifiable also. This is the principle which defends those extremities to which the violence of war usually proceeds; for since war is a contest by *force* between parties who acknowledge no common superior, and since it includes not in its idea the supposition of any convention which should place limits to the operation of force, it has naturally no boundary but that in which force terminates—the destruction of the life against which the force is directed. Let it be observed, however, that the licence of war authorizes no acts of hostility but what are necessary or conducive to the end and object of the war. Gratuitious barbarities borrow no excuse from this plea: of which kind is every cruelty and every insult that serves only to exasperate the sufferings, or to increase the hatred, of an enemy, without weakening his strength, or in any manner tending to procure his submission; such as the slaughter of captives, the subjecting of them to indignities or torture, the violation of women, the profanation of temples, the demolition of public buildings, libraries, statues, and in general, the destruction or defacing of works that conduce nothing to annoyance or defence. These enormities are prohibited not only by the practice of civilized nations, but by the law of nature itself; as having no proper tendency to accelerate the termination, or accomplish the object, of the war; and as containing that which in peace and war is equally unjustifiable,—ultimate and gratuitous mischief.

There are other restrictions imposed upon the conduct of war, not by the law of nature primarily, but by the *laws of war* first, and by the laws of nature as seconding and ratifying the laws of war. The laws of war are part of the law of nations; and founded, as to their authority, upon the same principle with the rest of that code, namely, upon the fact of their being established, no matter when or by whom; upon the expectation of their being mutually observed, in consequence of that establishment: and upon the general utility which results from such

observance. The binding force of these rules is the greater, because the regard that is paid to them must be universal or none. The breach of the rule can only be punished by the subversion of the rule itself: on which account, the whole mischief that ensues from the loss of those salutary restrictions which such rules prescribe, is justly chargeable upon the first aggressor. To this consideration may be referred the duty of refraining in war from poison and from assassination. If the law of nature simply be consulted, it may be difficult to distinguish between these and other methods of destruction, which are practised without scruple by nations at war. If it be lawful to kill an enemy at all, it seems lawful to do so by one mode of death as well as by another; by a dose of poison, as by the point of a sword; by the hand of an assassin, as by the attack of an army: for if it be said that one species of assault leaves to an enemy the power of defending himself against it, and that the other does not; it may be answered, that we possess at least the same right to cut off an enemy's defence, that we have to seek his destruction. In this manner might the question be debated, if there existed no rule or law of war upon the subject. But when we observe that such practices are at present excluded by the usage and opinions of civilized nations; that the first recourse to them would be followed by instant retaliation; that the mutual licence which such attempts must introduce, would fill both sides with the misery of continual dread and suspicion, without adding to the strength or success of either; that when the example came to be more generally imitated, which it soon would be, after the sentiment that condemns it had been once broken in upon, it would greatly aggravate the horrors and calamities of war, yet procure no superiority to any of the nations engaged in it: when we view these effects, we join in the public reprobation of such fatal expedients, as of the admission amongst mankind of new and enormous evils without necessity or advantage. The law of nature, we see at length, forbids these innovations, as so many transgressions of a beneficial general rule actually subsisting.

The licence of war then acknowledges *two* limitations: it authorizes no hostilities which have not an apparent tendency to effectuate the object of the war; it respects those positive laws which the custom of nations hath sanctified, and which, whilst they are mutually conformed to, mitigate the calamities of war, without weakening its operations, or diminishing the power or safety of belligerent states.

Long and various experience seems to have convinced the nations of Europe, that nothing but a *standing army* can oppose a standing army, where the numbers on each side bear any moderate proportion to one another. The first standing army that appeared in Europe after the fall of the Roman legion, was that which was erected in France by Charles VII. about the middle of the fifteenth century; and that the institution hath since become general, can only be attributed to the superiority and success which are every where observed to attend it. The truth is, the closeness, regularity, and quickness, of their movements; the unreserved, instantaneous, and almost mechanical, obedience to orders; the sense of personal honour, and the familiarity with dan-

ger, which belong to a disciplined, veteran, and embodied soldiery, give such firmness and intrepidity to their approach, such weight and execution to their attack, as are not to be withstood by loose ranks of occasional and newly levied troops, who are liable by their inexperience to disorder and confusion, and in whom fear is constantly augmented by novelty and surprize. It is possible that a *militia*, with a great excess of numbers, and a ready supply of recruits, may sustain a defensive or a flying war against regular troops: it is also true that any service, which keeps soldiers for a while together, and inures them by little and little to the habits of war and the dangers of action, transforms them in effect into a standing army. But upon this plan it may be necessary for almost a whole nation to go out to war to repel an invader; beside that a people so unprepared must always have the seat, and with it the miseries of war, at home, being utterly incapable of carrying their operations into a foreign country.

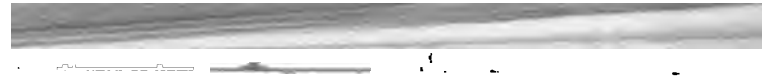
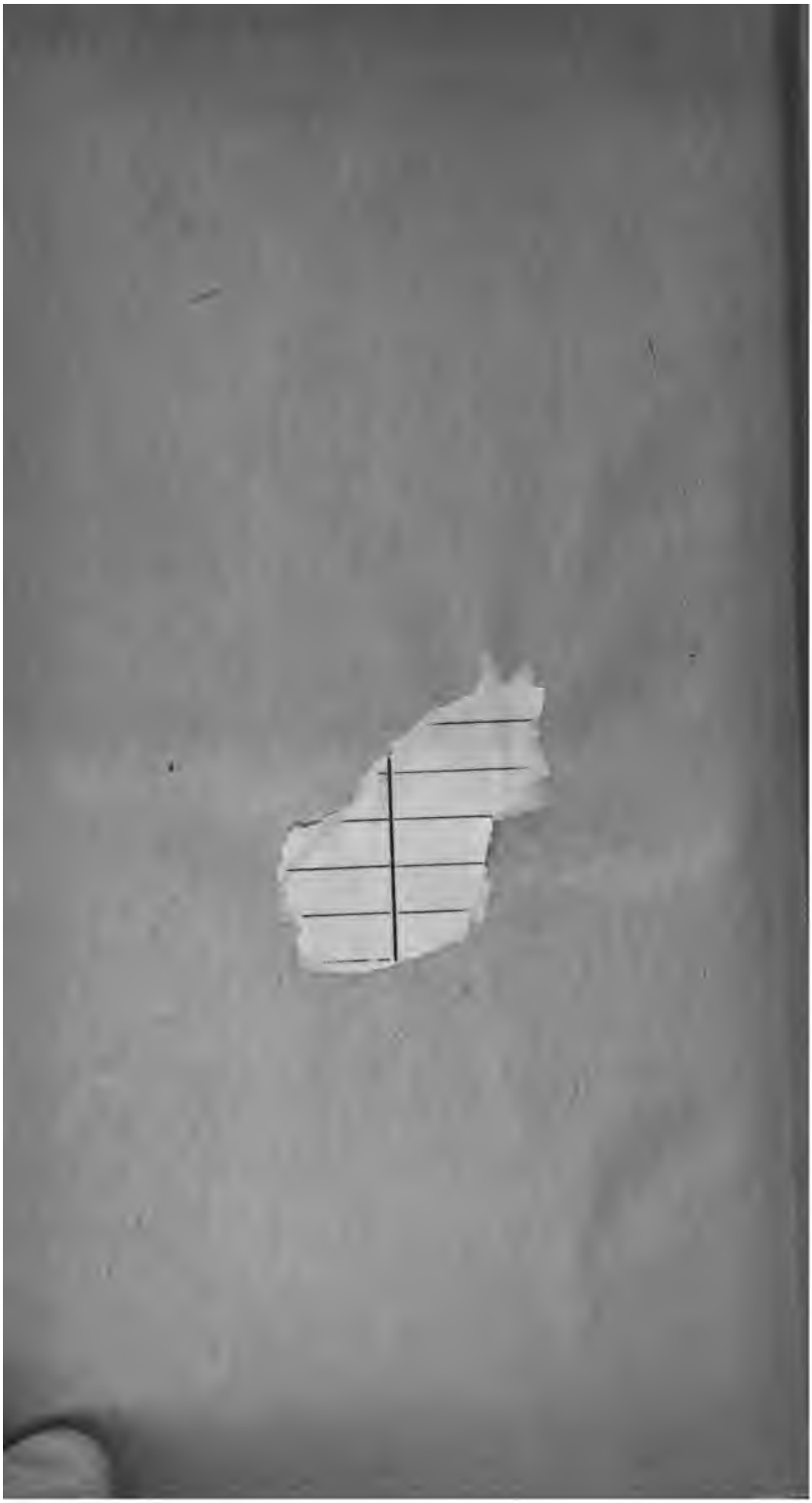
From the acknowledged superiority of standing armies, it follows, not only that it is unsafe for a nation to disband its regular troops, whilst neighbouring kingdoms retain theirs; but also that regular troops provide for the public service at the least possible expense. I suppose a certain quantity of military strength to be necessary, and I say, that a standing army costs the community less than any other establishment which presents to an enemy the same force. The constant drudgery of low employments is not only incompatible with any great degree of perfection or expertness in the profession of a soldier, but the profession of a soldier almost always unfits men for the business of regular occupations. Of three inhabitants of a village, it is better that one should addict himself entirely to arms, and the other two stay constantly at home to cultivate the ground, than that all the three should mix the avocations of a camp with the business of husbandry. By the former arrangement, the country gains one complete soldier, and two industrious husbandmen; from the latter it receives three raw militiamen, who are at the same time three idle and profligate peasants. It should be considered also, that the emergencies of war wait not for seasons. Where there is no standing army ready for immediate service, it may be necessary to call the reaper from the fields in harvest, or the ploughman in seed-time; and the provision of a whole year may perish by the interruption of one month's labour. A standing army, therefore, is not only a more effectual, but a cheaper method of providing for the public safety, than any other, because it adds more than any other to the common strength, and takes less from that which composes the wealth of a nation,—its stock of productive industry.

There is yet another distinction between standing armies and militias, which deserves a more attentive consideration than any that has been mentioned. When the state relies, for its defence, upon a militia, it is necessary that arms be put into the hands of the people at large. The militia itself must be numerous, in proportion to the want or inferiority of its discipline, and the imbecilities or defects of its constitution. Moreover, as such a militia must be supplied by rotation, allotment, or some mode of succession whereby they who have served a certain time are replaced by fresh draughts from the country, a much greater number will be instructed in the use of arms, and will have been occasionally embodied together, than are actually employed, or than are sup-

posed to be wanted, at the same time. Now what effects upon the civil condition of the country may be looked for from this general diffusion of the military character, becomes an inquiry of great importance and delicacy. To me it appears doubtful whether any government can be long secure, where the people are acquainted with the use of arms, and accustomed to resort to them. Every faction will find itself at the head of an army; every disgust will excite commotion, and every commotion become a civil war. Nothing, perhaps, can govern a nation of armed citizens but that which governs an army—despotism. I do not mean that a regular government would become despotic by training up its subjects to the knowledge and exercise of arms, but that it would ere long be forced to give way to despotism in some other shape; and that the country would be liable to what is even worse than a settled and constitutional despotism,—to perpetual rebellions, and to perpetual revolutions; to short and violent usurpations; to the successive tyranny of governors, rendered cruel and jealous by the danger and instability of their situation.

The same purposes of strength and efficacy which make a standing army necessary at all, make it necessary, in mixed governments, that this army be submitted to the management and direction of the prince; for, however well a popular council may be qualified for the offices of legislation, it is altogether unfit for the conduct of war; in which success usually depends upon vigour and enterprise; upon secrecy, despatch, and unanimity; upon a quick perception of opportunities, and the power of seizing every opportunity immediately. It is likewise necessary that the obedience of an army be as prompt and active as possible; for which reason it ought to be made an obedience of will and emulation. Upon this consideration is founded the expediency of leaving to the prince not only the government and destination of the army, but the appointment and promotion of its officers; because a design is then alone likely to be executed with zeal and fidelity, when the person who issues the order, chooses the instruments, and rewards the service. To which we may subjoin, that, in governments like ours, if the direction and *officering* of the army were placed in the hands of the democratic part of the constitution, this power, added to what they already possess, would so overbalance all that would be left of regal prerogative, that little would remain of monarchy in the constitution, but the name and expense; nor would these probably remain long.

Whilst we describe, however, the advantages of standing armies, we must not conceal the danger. These properties of their constitution, the soldiery being separated in a great degree from the rest of the community, their being closely linked amongst themselves by habits of society and subordination, and the dependency of the whole chain upon the will and favour of the prince,—however essential they may be to the purposes for which armies are kept up, give them an aspect in no wise favourable to public liberty. The danger, however, is diminished by maintaining, on all occasions, as much alliance of interest, and as much intercourse of sentiment, between the military part of the nation and the other orders of the people, as are consistent with the union and discipline of an army. For which purpose, officers of the army, upon whose disposition towards the commonwealth a great deal

may depend, should be taken from the principal families of the country, and at the same time also be encouraged to establish in it families of their own, as well as be admitted to seats in the senate, to hereditary distinctions, and to all the civil honours and privileges that are compatible with their profession; which circumstances of connexion and situation will give them such a share in the general rights of the people, and so engage their inclinations on the side of public liberty, as to afford a reasonable security that they cannot be brought, by any promises of personal aggrandizement, to assist in the execution of measures which might enslave their posterity, their kindred, and their country.

THE END.